

DEEP RED



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SPECIAL EDITION

Edited by Chas. Balun.

EDITOR/ DESIGN / LAYOUT

Chas. Balun

WRITERS

Chas. Balun

Stephen R. Bissette

Shane M. Callahan

Dennis Dardot

Walter Gay

Kris Gilpin

Greg Goodell

Steven R. Johnson

John Martin

Thomas Nöcker

Paul Sammon

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

Chas. Balun

Gurcharan Singh

Bruce Spaulding Fuller

TYPOGRAPHY / DESIGN

Eric Haxemann

Hank Jansen

PUBLISHER

FantaCo Enterprises, Inc.

21 Central Avenue

Albany, New York



Introduction	5
Daria Argento/Face to Face	8
On Your Knees in The Church	25
I Dream of Demons Sergio Silevanti Interview	37
Hand It to Rome	32
Shaun Hutson: The Secret of His Knees	35
The Strange Case of Ruggero Deodato	43
Go For The Gross-Out	51
The Monster Lives In A Glass Cage	57
Here's Blood In Your Eye: Stalking Splatter's Sacred Cows	70
Corpse-Hanging as High Art/Interview with Nekromantik's Jorg Ruttingerelt	74
Nasty III - A User Friendly Guide	78
MonsterFido by Chas. Balun	81
Gurch's Gallery	83
The Fuller Folio	84
John McNaughton's Portrait of a Serious Conspirator	85
Guinea Pig: Cutting-Edge Splatter or Porco Gore?	96
What You Will Not Find in Any Other Book	94
Director's Cut	99
Man, Myth, and Maniac: Interview with William Lustig	103
The Bloodspattered Bride: The Lesbian Vampire as Revolutionary	108
The Gore Scoreboard	113
Deep Red Postscript	122
Chumblower: A Movie with Guts	127

INTRODUCTION

Much like the genre itself, *Deep Red* magazine has undergone a fairly radical metamorphosis since we first came appeared in the summer of 1988. Then, there was much to be happy, enthusiastic and hopeful about. For awhile, it seemed as though the immediate future of horror was assured. There was plenty of the New Wave in go around and many veteran genre directors seemed to be dominating their crafts. Screenwriters like Stuart Gordon, Clive Barker, Peter Jackson, John McNaughton and Michele Soavi were writing the parameters of horror alongside established directors like David Cronenberg, George Romero and Dennis Aronoff, who appeared at the peak of their powers.

"Splatterpunk" was born and young, talented writers like David J. Schow, John Skipp, Craig Spector and Ray Garton created contemporary horror fiction with a rebellious colorist mix of rock 'n' roll, splatter, sex and shocks that established a new benchmark for explicit genre literature.

Horror was hot hot and soon, the genre would be exporting a half dozen gleamy, mass-market magazines thick full of eye-popping cuttings, special effects and behind the scenes insight on dozens of films that just seemed the good to be true.

However, the accumulated effect of all this activity within the community proved to have quite an unexpected result. Instead of a renaissance in genre filmmaking, the bottom fell out. Horror films were being hamstrung by not only the MPAA's over-zealousness, censorship, but by distributors who were unable to make the product. "It's money was dead," they said and according to many, "you couldn't give away a porn film." Many noteworthy genre efforts including John McNaughton's *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* and *The Breather*, Jim Van Bellen's *Smother* or Dean and Peter Jackson's *Bad Taste* found a long, uphill struggle against small—often charitable distributors who had no desire to market films that defied simple classification.

The rest of movie-making again began to dry-up, and as the 90's approached the Motion Picture Association of America estimated that the average Hollywood production was costing a cool \$12.5 million.

Audiences expected a certain "production

sheen" to be seen in film and soon the getting, low-budget splatterfest as prevalent as the early 80's began to become an endangered species. Even video distributors, who became the de facto drive-in market of the decade, were stocking multiple copies of the mainstream blockbusters at the expense of their usually reliable offerings of "B" movies.

Filmmakers were taking from chance with their material in hopes of earning an even wider audience and awards in established hits were becoming the order of the day. Then expensive mistakes of 80's hits became the rage.

By decade's end, the genre masters and shakers of the early 80's—John Carpenter, Tobe Hooper, Wes Craven, Sean Conneryham, Joe Dante and George Romero—seemed to have already put their best work behind them. Most filmmakers started eager to shed their horror reputations for a chance at a make picture deal and an opportunity to work with a more generous budget. Many simply denied they were genre directors at all and actively resisted the association.

Horror escaped from the theaters and splattered across the nation's TV screens for a time, making its headlines, half hour filler like *Friday's Nightmare*, *Friday the 13th: The Series*, *Video from the Darkside* and *Shivers*. Cable horror films like Tobe Hooper's *The Dungeon* Tonight proved just as tame as network TV's *Daughter of Darkness* directed by Stuart Gordon and any number of other primitive outlets ray obscenity fueled by Wes Craven.

For years, no single film galvanized the horror community like *No Tomorrow* did in 1985 and *Red Dawn* in 1985. *Red Dawn* came closest, but American audiences were deprived of a theatrical experience and had to settle for splatter served up cold and on the video screen.

Even the slick New York magazines were beginning to fight over the scraps of such misanthropical films as *Halloween 4: Nightmare on Elm Street 5: Freddy's Night 2*, *Dream Demon* or *Friday the 13th: VHS*. Some pay photos, some tied up words. In less than a year, magazines like *Splatterhouse*, *Horror Fan* and *Fear* horror went down for the count. Although the nonprofessional became some continued to flourish thanks in part to their ever-expanding reach for words, horror, alone amidst the remaining "pre movie" continued to flourish and fight for freedom. Everyone copied an attitude. Some turned their noses up at the

writers of *Alphaville*, *Barva et Decadite*. Others refused films without *Slushy FX*. Some bled in *Slushy* bag it hurt.

It was approximately at this point that *Deep Red* took a vacation. Not only was there less and less of movie to write about, but even hard-core, unconstructed splatter heads rapidly tire of editorializing concerning the current state of affairs while waxing nostalgic about the good ol' days. *Deep Red*, the magazine, had made its mark. It was time for a change.

Because the disposable and topical nature of all magazines, both editor and publisher of *Deep Red* agreed that the future demanded something more versatile in the way of contemporary horror criticism. Besides, small press publishers are always at a decided disadvantage when competing with mainstream, new-angled publications and cannot hope to compete with periodicals that offer full on, four-color art throughout and hope to maintain a manageable cover price.

Despite the risk appeal and relative success of a small-press product like *Deep Red*, we were unable to meet the financial demands imposed by the overwhelming forces at work in both the printing and distribution arenas and each issue became more truly a ordeal. While our ambitions and hopes for the future soared, budgetary limitations hit us in the face like a back alley sucker-punch. And finally, your editor was rapidly approaching burnout after writing regularly for both *Fangoria* and *Gravestone* for several years, editing and laying out an issue of *Deep Red*, as well as being involved in numerous related book projects.

It got to the point that I had run out of things to say. Perhaps that should be rephrased to read something "positive" to say. I had always enjoyed a relatively free forum in which to shoot my mouth off, but into the magazine became tired and redundant. There simply was little going on to get excited about. I also wanted to explore other opportunities where I felt I might make a positive contribution to the genre rather than just rely on another, mediocre rehashing of others' work to sustain my position in the field. Writing a horror novel, *Mask and Hell Street*, as well as co-scripting the feature film *Chuckylover* for Canada's *Plasma* Films provided me the chance to put my money where my mouth was. *Deep Red* was never far from mind, though, and plans were always afoot to recover the *Reign* in one form or another.

The *Deep Red* Mirror Newsletter became our first real attempt at metamorphosis, shape-shifting if you will. True, *Deep Red* the magazine appeared dead and buried, but its spirit remained totally viable and highly operantive. Other projects were

soon discussed and both editor and publisher again agreed that *Deep Red* should and would continue, in one form or another.

As other magazines and publications continued to rely upon bulletin board pieces that shamelessly typed a plethora of bombarded genre entries and the attending legions of self-serving, publicity-hungry filmmakers, *Deep Red* again became relevant and necessary. Sure, we slipped favorites in the past, but much of our reputation was earned by the many critical, sometimes scorching, features we ran that openly attacked many of the genre's most sacred cows. We were taking the band that was leading us, but we liked it that way, and so did our readers.

Our staff writers were fans first and critics second. In, despite the blindest hostility and vengeful cynicism displayed in many of our features, our writers remained motivated primarily by their obsessive love for the horror film and were only venting their frustrations over their beloved genre gone awry. *Deep Red* gave free rein to its writers and encouraged them to tell the truth--be painfully honest if need be--but above all, get down to the meat of the matter regardless of whose toes get stamped on.

Well, our job is not yet finished. At the dawn of a new decade, the genre has been sending out a series of mixed signals. Though most fans believed the MPAA was at least partially responsible for the decline in graphic horror, the new NC-17 rating has not proven to be the panacea that many were hoping for. Some newspapers and several theaters have still refused to promote films with the controversial new rating and plenty of slaphap reactions to *Violence* as a controversially-established "R" rating on a completed film.

Other films like Brian Yaman's *Security* and *Arise of the Animator*, Peter Jackson's *Mist the Politics*, and Dora Argenia's *Queen* and *Two Red Eyes* are languishing in Distribution Hell. American audiences remain staunchly unimpressed and the mere thought goes film that makes it to outside theaters is usually heavily cut, carelessly dubbed and haphazardly distributed. Besides Argenia and Jackson, other high-profile names outside the Michael Bay/George Fraga, The Church, Lasse Hallstrom, *James 3*, *The End Month*, *Armageddon*, *Hardcore*, etc. i.e. Ruggiero Decadite *Dead Help*, *Plasma* of *Death* have not exactly been afforded the red carpet treatment by either the theatrical outlets or the video cassette marketplace.

Though respect and reverence to established lore continue (see strengthened in the genre), there are promising signs that the trend may be withering as the vein. The spectacular box office receipts in *Beloved 3*, *Nightmare on Elm Street 3*,

Friday the 13th VIII, Predator II, and Gremlins 2 have led greedily, opportunistic studios to the inevitable—the final chapter: New Line's last gasp is the Krueger Killathon now appears to be Nightmares II. Freddy's Dead. Let's hope as Exorcism remains like The Shog, The Thing and Invasion From Mars failed to generate much heat at the box office. Even the George Romero/Tom Savini can't mess-around-what remains of Night of the Living Dead but somehow sink in a big way.

The sequel and the remake may be at least partially exempt by decade's end, but it appears that the pulpy horror comedy may be here to stay. The closest thing to a box office success within the genre in 1990 was the "devil comedy" *Arachnophobia*, a marginal horror film at best, but a \$50.7 million winner on the volume that counts. It's equally becoming quite difficult to remember the last genuinely scary moment spent inside a theater during the last five years or so. Now that's a truly horrifying thought.

Despite solid evidence to the contrary, the contemporary horror film is in no real danger. The genre has proven again and again throughout the century that it is one tough, resilient and tenacious muck-thriller. It may appear dead at times, but revives from beyond the grave as an established, renewed tradition within the genre.

So, at the beginning of the last decade in the twentieth century, the horror film may be down, but it's hardly out of the picture. Westerns, detective thrillers, film noir, war pictures and musicals have suffered far more through the years than the venerable horror film. From cinema's inception, with Georges Melies' *Le Manoir du Diable* (*The Manor of the Devil*) in 1896 and Thomas Edison's 16 minute *Frankenstein* shot in 1910, the horror film has proven itself capable of constantly reinventing, redefining and reexamining itself no matter what the odds are—ambivalence may be.

Despite the overt cynicism and acute commercial instincts prevalent in the film business, there still seems a nearly unbreakable flow of New Blood into the genre—people whose fierce dedication and love for the horror film will not be compromised. Some of these people eat, breathe and sleep filmmaking and their faith and perseverance is the kind that never wavers. They believe in movies. There is simply too much talent and wild-eyed, unfappable enthusiasm out there to be denied.

People become fans. Fans become super fans and many of these go on to become writers, artists, actors, directors and producers. The regular spiritual pattern of rebirth and regeneration within the genre remains the most promising and encouraging sign of the things to come.

Stay Red will be right there with you. in the front row

CHAS BALEN, WINTER 1992

DARIO ARGENTO



FACE TO FACE

by Chas. Balun

Additional material by Dennis Daniel and Thomas Nilsson



It needs to be said in great and without further delay. What has been merely hinted at and alluded to for years can now be safely stated for all to hear: Dario Argento is the genre's Greatest Living Director. And, I'll go to the mat on this one, too.

With a career spanning well over two decades, Argento has produced an unbroken body of work that is unparalleled in the genre. His consistency of vision, his undoubted, deeply felt passion and masterful control of his medium have produced a series of films that almost any of the finest moments ever seen in genre filmmaking. He alone remains a true Maestro in a league of Mediocrity.

Argento is practically an anomaly in a field that has not consistently placed a premium on established formulas and commercial viability of its product. In a world filled with high profile horror icons like Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees, Leatherface and Michael Myers, there seems to be no room at the inn for a man who is really and truly deadly serious about his work. He unquestionably possesses a genuine and heartrending love for his art and, contrary to most of his contemporaries, almost *finds* working within the parameters of the horror

film to be the most fulfiling and rewarding. When his camera roars, perspective or plotline disappears down the tunnels of his dreams: we are left with what none have seen before. The spectacular aerial acrobatics seen in such films as *Suspiria*, *Tenebrae*, *Phenomena* and *Open Eyes* show us a master whose cinematic talent is restricted by the actual limitations of his craft. Argento has consistently and relentlessly pursued a pure, undiluted personal vision of genre grandeur that equates most other horror filmmakers for the studies heads they are.

It is, indeed, a rare bit of luck, a privilege even, that contemporary audiences have been able to "grow up" along with Argento's career. The fact that Argento has never denigrated nor overlooked his work within the genre further enables him to an audience genre accustomed to opportunistic journeyman filmmakers who jump ship as soon as they're offered their first "real Hollywood film."

Argento is obviously very proud of what he has accomplished. He makes no secret. He is not trying to be popular, he's never, ever been the "Pleasure of the Month." He places demands upon his audience—many of his films are far from being

"unhappily." While others routinely offer up photographs of the latest fast food designer fights with alarming regularity, Argento has continued to confront, expose and challenge his audience for well over two decades.

He has brought major hurt to a contaminated and weary world that has little time for flights of fancy of any kind. Not only has he revived the ancient art, but as in *Suspiria*, he has proven that, indeed, "there is magic all around us."

From his modest beginnings as a journalist for one of Italy's foremost newspapers, *Tuttosport*, Argento has risen from the ranks of film criticism, screenwriting and musical composition to become one of the few genuine auteurs in the genre. After writing several screenplays in the 60's, including Sergio Leone's classic *Once Upon A Time in the West* (1968), Argento made his directorial debut with *The Bird With the Crystal Plume* in 1970 and was awarded *disphoria* proclaiming him Italy's "Next New Director" and maker of the "Year's Best Film."

For the next twenty years, Argento produced a prodigious body of work that diminished as decade's end with a flurry of projects including *Opera*, *Two Evil Eyes*, Michele Soavi's *The Church* and Luchano Salvi's two *Demon* films. Argento will always be seen as a sign of disenfranchisement with the genre and remains a highly animated, enthusiastic "traveler" who feels as though he has completed only part of his voyage.

In person, Argento is a warm, engaging, generous man. Despite the cruelty and violence in his work, his manner is that of a pure, delicate, man. It is soon made quite clear, though, that Argento is a man possessed. An artist driven by passions and obsessions that even he may not understand fully. Regardless, those fleeting and elusive glimpses we have seen of Argento's private *Heaven* and *Hell* have provided the genre with enough raw material to fuel a thousand nightmares.

Perhaps Stephen King had it all wrong when he declared Clint Barker "the future of horror." Maybe, just maybe, it should have read, "I have seen the past, present and the future of horror and it's none has been, will be, and ever shall be. Darro Argento."

(This interview was conducted both before and during the 1990 FantaCon in Albany, New York.)

"I concentrate on cruelty," says Argento, "not blood. The psychological aspect of human cruelty is extremely fascinating. Violence is a means of communication, a way of expressing myself. I don't know why I love that, perhaps, in

part, because life is too boring, people are too boring. In the movies, in the *dark*, the love, the emotions become my reality. And reality I do not love."

Though not completely fluent yet at even with speaking in English, Argento's boundless parasitically assemblies then delivers his thoughts slowly and thoughtfully, constantly punctuating his statements with graceful, animated hand gestures. He explains that he "learned English from songs" that he'd heard on the radio. "I love Bob Dylan especially," Argento adds.

Before Argento would dangle both critics and audiences alike with his first effort, *Bird With the Crystal Plume*, he worked with a variety of collaborators writing westerns and action pictures like *The Five Man Army*, *Conquest*, *Richard Boone*, and *Today It's My Turn* as *Joe*. Both Argento and Bernardo (1968), *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) worked with Sergio Leone on the epic western *Once Upon A Time in the West*, which starred Henry Fonda, Jason Robards, Charles Bronson and Klaus Kinski amongst its all-star, international cast. "I did an original treatment for the film, inspired mainly by two films—*Johnny Guitar* and *The Searchers*."

The Church



Dario Argento

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LA PICCOLA
BOTTEGA
DEGLI ORRORI



Donner, 67, in 1993

Wells' *Bird With the Crystal Plumage* contained the various gobs, both *Car O'More* (1971) and *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (1971) cemented Argento's reputation as "the Italian Hitchcock." *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* climaxes with

"Violence is a means of communication; a way of expressing myself. I don't know why I love this; perhaps, in part because life is too boring, people are too boring."

one of the most spectacular slow-motion descriptions in screen history. (Richard Donner was later to reprise the trick six years later in *The Godfather*, when David Warner is rendered headless by flying shark fins.)

Henry Fonda co-starred with Michael Brandon partly because "she reminded me of my wife at the time," Argento admits. "She was very good in it, too, by the way, but she did have a similar nose, hair and face."

Argento changed directions after *Grey Velvet*, pursuing a more operatic and gothic approach in such films as *Deep Red* (1975), *Suspense* (1975) and *Jeune Femme* (1976). He frequently changed cinematographers as well as composers from film to film in order to better accommodate his ever-evolving vision. "Ennio Morricone was a friend of the family," Argento remembers. "For many many years he would come to our house. When I made my first picture, my father called Morricone and said 'take a look.' That began a collaboration that lasted for three pictures."

To compose the soundtracks for his next films, Argento "invented" the group *Goblin*. "I put this group together; they never existed before," he says. "I knew many young musicians then that

come from the conservatory directly to our studios."

Argento also composed much of the film's music in his head long before he would shoot his first reel of film. "Before *Shogun*, I took a week's vacation in Greece and I saw a wonderful musician playing a harp," he recalls. "It was the first time I had ever heard one so I bought one and brought it back with me. I experimented with it before I shot anything. About a month before shooting, I composed the main title theme."

With *Shogun*, he also employed the talents of Keith Emerson to further embellish the lush, orchestral scores that were to become his trademark until 1984's *Phenomena* again broke the mold. "I was a rock-'n'-roll fan," Argento says, "but I eternally enjoyed the music of Emerson, Lake and Palmer. When I met Keith, the group was already finished. He played me rock-'n'-roll on *Shogun*. Though, it was more classically prepared."

"Every picture I change the music and with every picture I change the cinematographer. Through the vision is still mine, it is exciting to have a new experience with another person."

Deep Red also began Argento's flirtation with the dramatic, candy-colored technicolor beauty that have consistently remained an earmark of most of his subsequent work. The inspiration for some of Argento's most audacious color schemes is revealed to come from a most unlikely source. "Color schemes, especially the *Shogun* ones, have fantastic colors," enthuses Argento. "The movie that most influenced me as far as color was *Snow White*. In fact, *Shogun* was inspired by the coloring in that film."

"I concentrate on cruelty, not blood. The psychological aspect of human cruelty is extremely fascinating."

During the filming of *Shogun*, Argento remembers and describes in tender and wistful terms his working relationship with his aging mother, Maria Bava. "I had known Maria for many, many years. Her son, Lamberto, and I dated girls in the same class who were also friends. Maria was one of my best friends. Maria made the special effects for the last part of *Shogun*—the windows, the *giant*—and the stunning room underwater! This would be wonderful work. Then right after the *Shogun* had shot."

During the 80's, Argento's films were rarely seen on theatre screens in the United States, once they did surface on video-cassettes, they were unfortunately cut and mutilated. *Shogun* was shown at most of its original scenes of violence,



including the notoriously famous 'reporting stamp' and refrained in truncated form as *Ghoulies*. *Phenomena* suffered an even harsher fate, as close to a half hour of footage was lost before it was released on standard cassette as *Chapters*. Argento is clearly annoyed by the revisions his films have received in the United States. "When someone tells





my films, taken out particular scenes, I ask why? It makes no sense," he shrugs.

"If one picture is made in European style, Argentine style—it's difficult to make it appear like an American film. The American 'medium' of movie making is different. It is easy to make films here, everything is modern and very professionally handled. It was wonderful to work for six months in Pittsburgh with George Stevens on *The Bad News*. There are great technicians and engineers. And the cameras are beautiful."

Argento, however, is definitely at odds with the other aspect of statewide movie-making—the business and distribution end that has consistently failed to properly market an Argentine film. "I do not love the American horror picture, they always include comedy and laughter. The killer, he's nice, or he's a joke. The U.S. distributors are very important. They do not love movies, they love only money. They are far too commercial and that is not the way. They do not even know the film is out, they only think by editing my work they can get more of an audience."

"I do not love the American horror picture; they always include comedy and laughter. The killer, he's nice, or he's a joke."

Argento clearly enjoys the fanaticism expressed in some centers for his work and always includes little tribally touches and tributes to those perceptions enough to catch them in each of his films. "I was always inspired by the German Expressionists and their strange camera, lights and movements. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Metropolis* and *M* are masterpieces. In *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*, I named the main character 'Fritz Lang Sweet.' People who know my work understand there is always a piece of me in all my films. The fly in *Opera* is a tribute to *Phantom of the Opera*. In every picture I try to put something in it—a sequence, a shot that is my signature. The things of my childhood—the lighting, the corridors, the stairs and the blood and love. In every picture I have at least one spectacular, accident camera shot, like in *Tenebre* and *Opera* that remains mine alone."

In both *Opera* and *Tenebre* Argento also makes several comments about both fan obsessions and devotional pictures. "In *Tenebre* there are some answers to those who have been critical of my work. The same applies to *Opera* where a newspaper critic is telling the director to 'return to his old horror pictures.' I put things from my real life in both these pictures."



Study dress-up in *The Obsession*



He also reveals the source for many of his trademark sequences—the nightmares. “They really come from my nightmares. And sometimes in the night, before I fall asleep, I think these strange thoughts and then write them down. I remember one obscure dream about returning in a room alone and hearing an airplane overhead in the night sky. I fantasized about it crashing into the room

and devouring it.” That particular dream became the helicopter-through-the-roof sequence in *Demonic*.

Both *Demonic* films were produced by Argento and directed by Lamberto Bava. Argento is clearly ambivalent about Bava's most recent independent efforts. There have been numerous reports that Argento was once too pleased to see Bava attempt to release his film *The Gaze* as sort of an unofficial *Demonic* 2. Michele Soavi's most recent film, *The Church* (also produced by Argento), was always intended as the official successor to Bava's series. “I did not see his picture *The Gaze*. For three years I have not collaborated with Bava. He's just recently finished another picture for television. He has made many, many short pictures for TV. That's what he wanted to do for a few years. We were a group,” Argento sighs. “Michele Soavi, Bava and me. We were regularly making a couple of pictures every year.”

The Church

“Maybe we should be careful with the adults instead. Kids understand movies are a world of the nightmare, of dreams, inventions and music.”

After producing both of Dario's films as short variations, Argento returned to directing what was to become his most problematic film: *Opera*. Budgeted at \$7 million and requiring nearly 12 weeks of principal photography at Italy's famed De Paolis Studios, was, by far, Argento's most elaborate and costly production. The high costs were not merely financial; the film exacted a heavy personal toll from the filmmaker as well. Besides suffering one of the worst critical drubbings of his career, Argento's father, long time producer Salvatore Argento, died during the filming of *Opera*, another actor was killed in an automobile accident, Vanessa Redgrave pulled out at the very last minute, and Argento's engagement was on the rocks by film's end. *Opera* was further plagued by censorship controversies, indifferent distribution and a lackluster box office.

The film is clearly very close to Argento's heart. "I think *Opera*, *Deep Red* and *Suspense* are the three pictures that are very close to my original vision."

"The movie that most influenced me as far as color was *Snow White*. In fact, *Suspense* was inspired by the coloring in that film."



"The ending of *Opera* was important to me. The distributors don't care. Orion cut it, maybe it bored them."

Once *Patterns* cut hefty chunks from *Opera* (though retaining all bits of graphic violence) and eliminated Argento's original ending, "The ending was important to me. The distributors don't care. Orion cut it, maybe it bored them."

"The picture is very cruel, sadistic," he admits, "it is one of my most cruel pictures. You can see many films filled with blood and things, but they're like a joke. *Opera* is real, something deeper."

In keeping with his tradition of changing cinematographers and composers for each of his films, Argento presents a handy, eclectic music mix in *Opera*. "I think the different kinds of music worked well. We had so many composers, but I think the music worked wonderfully together. It was difficult, though. We had Verdi, Puccini and Bellini, Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones, Brian Auger, 'new age' music and three heavy metal groups. I used metal especially because of the energy. He performs when you're very hungry in your soul and feeling the blood and the aggression."

After *Opera*, Argento once again turned producer and worked with long time stylist Michele Soavi on *The Church*, a supernatural thriller about a cathedral of the damned. Though *The Church* is only Dario's second full-length feature film, his genre credentials are staggering for a man still in his very early 30s. Besides directing the critically acclaimed *Diabolique* (American, Delux) in 1987, Soavi served as Argento's assistant on *Phenomena*, *Phantom of the Opera*, worked with Joe D'Amato, Lamberto Bava and Ruggero Deodato on such films as *Endgame*, *1999* / *Texas* / *Gladiators*, *I Predatori di Atlantide*, *Bloodfighter* and *House of the Dark Vampire*, and was Terry Gilliam's second unit director on *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. He has appeared in both *Demons* (as the punk prying out teeth) and *Luna Puma's The Gates of Hell* (he watches her chattering girlfriend lose her entire intestinal tract out her mouth) as well as directing the essential documentary on his mentor, *The Horror World of Dario Argento*. Soavi is currently the second hottest horror director in Italy, and no wonder.

The *Church* also features Anna Argento, who, along with her sister Fiore, have made a family tradition out of appearing in their father's films (*Phenomena*, *Demons* II).

(By Scott La Stine)



Page 100



In July, 1989, Argento began principal photography on *Two Evil Eyes*, a two part Edgar Allan Poe tribute co-directed by George Kuchar, whom Argento had worked with ten years prior on *Death of the Devil*. Though their chemistry up to now seems quite incompatible, Argento knows that it is something much deeper that drives them together. "It is strange, but it is something that comes from the soul. Our friendship is something mysterious, something nearly impossible to describe. Even we do not know exactly."

While Kuchar's segment, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," has been dismissed by most critics, many feel Argento's "The Black Cat" to be one of his most accessible, albeit gruesome, efforts. "At first, I decided to make *The PC* and the *Fendulum* (The Black Cat contains an especially nasty tribute), but after some time in writing, I changed my mind. 'The Black Cat' is more of a complete story and I think it is one of Poe's best. It has always been my greatest source of inspiration. I love Poe because I can understand his

"I used heavy-metal especially because of the energy. It's perfect when you're hungry in your soul and feeling the blood and the aggression."



pass. He is the one who pushed me into the horror genre."

Argento also acknowledges the endlessly late calls at home, for additional inspiration while writing his segment of the film. (Contrary to films evidence, Argento does, indeed, seem to prefer late calls.)

Two Evil Eyes caps off two decades of filmmaking for Argento and, unlike most of his contemporaries, he relishes future encounters in the genre. He acknowledges the fact that many "genre" directors have merely used the field as a stepping stone and that several others have expressed fatigue from working within genre boundaries. But "burn-out" is most definitely not part of Argento's vocabulary. "Some have wanted to see the horror film to go on to the next thing. Like Brian DePalma, with *Cannibal of War*, he has changed. He does not love the horror film like I do."

Argento also seems unaffected by the reputation most horror directors have in the eyes of the critical press. "This does not bother me. It is not important. I have come to realize that it is very hard to change people's ideas about horror films. It's okay. I am not desperate to be recognized as a so-called serious filmmaker."

"The U.S. distributors are very hypocritical. They do not love movies; they love only money."

Argento is also acutely aware of the problems his films have always had with the censorious attitudes of his inspiring portrayals of ghastly and explicit scenes of violence. He vehemently denounces the critics' claim that on-screen violence is tangentially related to murder



"Opera, Deep Red and Suspiria are the three pictures that are very close to my original vision."

activity in the real world. Argento feels that even his youngest audiences are perceptive enough to distinguish the difference.

"Maybe we should be careful with the adults instead," he smiles. "The kids understand movies are a world of the nightmare, of dreams, intentions and means. They see a horror film and say 'I love

this.' It is not real, it is a joke. When you make it too realistic in terms of story and setting, they don't like it because it is real. The young people, they know by their smile that this is the nightmare. The temperature—it is not life."

For the future, Argento expresses a studied interest in pursuing a direction he began while shaping *Phenomena*. He remains very interested and curious about the world of cinematography. "I want to make a picture seen through the eyes of a lizard with all these strange angles and perspectives. I knew when I made *Phenomena* that I wanted this. An entomologist made a study years ago and claimed he knew what the animals were seeing and what they were seeing. Their vision, like that of a

Continued



By, is strange—as different from ours. Now, I want to explore the veins of a lizard."

"I am an explorer," concludes Argento, "and there are still many, many things to show, to represent on film. I have explored but a piece of that forest, and it's a big, big forest."

In Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* (January 2, 1824), the German author asks, "Where do we see most an imperial nature? And where is the man who has the strength to be true and show himself as he is?"

We have found him—and with him, the magic all around us.



FILMOGRAPHY

- 1947 *Cemetery Without Crosses* (*Cimitero alle croci*) Story by Dario Argento Directed by Robert Hossein With Robert Hossein, Michèle Mercier and Ann Marie Moss
- 1950 *Take My Tumbone Year* (*Odd! A Mr. Giamini A Te...!*) Story and screenplay by Dario Argento Directed by Tonino Cervi
- 1950 *One Night at Dinner* (*Mardi, sera Sana a Cena*) Screenplay by Dario Argento Directed by Oreste Lionini
- 1950 *Sex Revolution* (*La Rivoluzione Sessuale*) Story and screenplay by Dario Argento Directed by Riccardo Ghione
- 1950 *Zero Probability* (*Probabilità Zero*) Story and screenplay by Dario Argento Directed by Maurizio Lazzari
- 1950 *Five Men Army* (*Un Esercito di Cinque*) Story and screenplay by Dario Argento Directed by Dan Taylor
- 1950 *Commander* Story by Dario Argento Directed by Armando Giarola
- 1950 *L Legion of the Damned* (*La Legione dei Dannati*) Dialog supervision by Dario Argento Directed by Umberto Lenzi
- 1950 *Season of Lovers* (*Le Stagione dei Senti*) Story supervision by Dario Argento Directed by Massimo Franciosa
- 1950 *Once Upon a Time in the West* Story by Dario Argento, Sergio Leone and Bernardo Bertolucci Directed by Sergio Leone With Henry Fonda, Jason Robards and Charles Bronson
- 1950 *Five Men Army* (*Esercito di Cinque*) Story by Dario Argento and Mario Pichard Directed by Dan Taylor With Peter Graves, James Daly and Bud Spencer
- 1950 *And With the Crystal Passage* (*E Uscendo dalle Piume di Cristallo*) With Tony Musante, Gary Randall and Eva Ford
- 1951 *The Car of Nine Falls* (*Il Carro a Nove Cadute*) With Karl Malden and James Franciose
- 1951 *Four Filled on Grey Velvet* (*Quattro Sessuati di Melotte Grigio*) With Michael Brandon, Minny Farmer and Jean Pierre Mauné
- 1952 *Spin Into Darkness* (*La Porta del Buio*) TV series included: *The Run of Time* Written and directed by Dario Argento *Home Neighbor* (*Il Vicino di Casa*) Written and directed by Luigi Cozzi *The Doll* (*La Bambola*) Written and directed by Mario Poglietti *Eyes Witness* (*Testimone Occluso*) Written by Luigi Cozzi and Dario Argento Directed by Dario Argento
- 1952 *Five Days of Milan* (*Le Cinque Giornate*) Screenplay and direction with Adriano Celentano, Ennio Cervino, Mario Telo
- 1952 *Deep Red* (*Profondo Rosso*) With David Hemmings, Daria Nicolodi and Gabriele Lavia
- 1952 *Suspense With Jessica Harper* Stefania Casini and Udo Kier
- 1952 *Queen of the Dead* (*Reina*) Dario Argento as co-producer and composer Directed by George A. Romero With David Engel, Kim Fowle, Scott Halinger and Gaylen Ross



The SMC Argento and his colleagues again.

- 1980 *Indecent* With Irene Mirano Leigh McCleary and Dana Nicoletti
- 1982 *Tenebre (aka Unholy) (Sotto gli Occhi dell'Assassino)* With Anthony Franciosa, John Saxon and Dana Nicoletti
- 1985 *Phenomena (aka Creepers)* With Jennifer Connelly, Dana Nicoletti and Donald Pleasence
- 1986 *Demons (Demoni)* Produced by Dario Argento Directed by Lamberto Bava With Urbano Barberini and Nathalie Hovv
- 1987 *Demons 2 (Demoni 2)* Produced by Dario Argento Directed by Lamberto Bava
- 1987 *The Horror World of Dario Argento* Directed by Michele Soavi
- 1987 *Mystery (Giallo)* Weekly TV program produced by Dario Argento Included *Night Shift (Turne di Notte)* Episodes directed by Lamberto Bava and Luigi Cozzi
- 1988 *Opera (aka Terror at the Opera)* With Christine Marshall, Ian Charleson, Urbano Barberini and Carla Mordelli
- 1989 *The Church (La Chiesa)* Produced by Dario Argento Directed by Michele Soavi With Hugh Quarshie, Tomas Arana, Feder Chazagh
- 1989 *Deep Evil Eyes (Due Occhi Diabolici)* Co-directed by George A. Romero With Athena Ruffalo, Harvey Kalai and Madeleine Potter
- 1990 *The Reel (Le Feste)* Written and produced by Dario Argento Directed by Michele Soavi
- 1991 *Unlabeled film written and directed by Dario Argento* Scheduled to be shot in the United States.

ON YOUR KNEES IN THE CHURCH

by
Chas. Balun

**THE CHURCH (1992) DIRECTED BY
MICHELE SOAVI 110 Minutes (Unrated
version)**

After Matteo Soavi's expert yet affectionate documentary *The Future World of Carlo Argento*, and his self-assured starring debut feature *Scappafate* (Aquatic, DeLuxe), many critics began to regard him as heir apparent to the unchallenged throne of Argento. With his second feature film, *The Church* (La Chiesa), Soavi has triumphantly fulfilled those expectations. Co-written and co-produced by Carlo Argento, *The Church* is a stylish, classy supernatural thriller that Soavi traverses cinematography, enhancing set pieces, generous doses of splatter and creature "It," a strong score (by Keith Emerson, Giorgio Ruozzi, Philip Glass and Gionini) and haunting imagery that lingers with you long after the closing credits.

The Church originally began as *Demons 3* with Umberto Lenzi again slated to direct, but the dismal box office of *Demons 2* forced wary producer investors to replace Lenzi. Soavi and the original script writer (Luca Bava) went on to direct an equally Italian TV movie called *The Ogre*, he substituted a *Demons 3*, so Soavi and Argento had to write for an alternate title. *Demons* gave precedent.

The Church begins in the Middle Ages, when

hundreds of suspected devil worshippers are brutally massacred and buried in a mass grave that later becomes the site of a massive Gothic cathedral. Soavi then propels the action forward by hundreds of years with a doxying, show-stopping camera tour de force that recalls the spectacular antique cinematography seen in such Argento films as *Scaphia*, *Tenebre* and *Ogre*.

When a new research mystique is out and misused during an archeological dig, evil forces trapped within the cathedral begin to manifest themselves. A priest is impaled on a fence post, a worker is pulled by a possessed jackhammer, a teacher is skewered by a rampaging madman while another does her back to ribbons. The chaos continues to escalate, and before Sergio Stivali is formed and winged down makes the best of two - backs with his female (Barbara Cupisti) in an early saintly seduction, we are treated to a winged woman hanging a decapitated head against a church bell while yet another struggling damsel gets her face smushed to pulp by a speeding train.

The unrated print opens into... and other graphic stunts including a man pulling out his beating heart and the spiky jackhammer exorcism are too hot to be missing in the TV-rated version. (Southgate Entertainment plans to release an unrated, unrated version as well, so relax.)

Argento's daughter, Asia, is also featured in a co-starring role as is Italian Stealer Legend John Mastroianni, who is once again triumpantly cast as a priest. (Check out Ruggieri Dardano's *Phantom of Death* for yet another role of Mastroianni Mastroianni.)

Though the film suffers somewhat from the clumsy, debasing dubbing and the pastiche running time, (just under two hours) *The Church* remains a striking, occasionally transcendent viewing experience that further reinforces both Argento and Scava's mastery of the medium.

Fans of the newly anointed Royal Italian Court of Connoisseur Honor will no doubt have yet another reason for rejoicing. Argento has just finished writing and producing Scava's latest film, *La Seta* (*The Silk*) starring Herbert Lohr and Kelly Leigh Curtis (Mama Lisa's sister).

By Stuart



I DREAM OF DEMONS



Profile of Italian F/X Maestro Sergio Stivaletti

by Thomas Nilsson

Sergio Stivaldi is one of a handful of the few fairly great FX artists in Europe. When, for instance, Dario Argento — the Master of the Macabre Horror — needs someone to visualize his famous tale of terror he calls Stivaldi. Still, the modest, softspoken Rome-based FX Supremo — who has supplied the red stuff for some of Pastafarà's most notorious splatter-fests — is still delivering his macabre shocks in the shadows of his more renowned American colleagues.

In 1968 Stivaldi and his FX disciples shocked audiences everywhere with eye popping, jaw dropping scenes of atrociously explicit guts n' gore scenes in Lamberto Bava's Demons — a bloodbath story of a haunted movie theatre where moviegoers turn into flesh-eating zombies. Today — its much in demand as ever in the native Italy — Sergio Stivaldi is hard at work, creating more of that which our darkest nightmares are made of. Thomas Arzouan has tracked down singer Gino Gaudino who talks openly about his work, hopes and dreams in this rare interview.

In Italy — as in most other parts of Europe — you rarely, if ever, hear about the talented make up artists that reside and work on this side of the Atlantic. The word simply doesn't seem to get around as much as in the States where creators of this bloody, often brutal world must more often receive the attention they crave. The likes of Tom Savini, Rick Baker, Rob Bottin and Dick Smith are — deservedly — treated like superstars while great art their European colleagues have yet to step out in the limelight. Maybe it is, in some ways, due to the various censorship boards that are persisting the horror movie makers in both continents. True, the MPAA do seem to become more powerful each year now, but these



The Once upon a time in really atrocious face jobs

When in the early 80's a tidal wave of megawatt gory Italian gore-fests crashed with never before seen explicit shock-scenes of the massacre, suddenly swept over us, European gore fiends like Lucio Fulci, Dario Argento, Lamberto Bava, Ruggero Deodato, Umberto Lenzi and Andrea Barchi had us all cheering, laughing and roaring in our seats.

The term "Spaghetti-horror" would soon become a household expression of those awestruck, brutal excursions into the dark and the "barbaric" and "cannibal" movies spread the word. Carhounds everywhere were applauding while the parents called for overtime in the cutting-room. But Dario Argento and friends were NOT aimed at the time. Sure enough those guys were invited in the director's chair, but the ones who really delivered the heavy shocks were of course the crew working in the shadows.

"I landed my first professional make up assignment back in 1963," remembers Sergio Stivaldi from his Rome studio, situated just around the corner from Italy's first, already famous HorrorMuseum shop "Phobos House".

"I was offered a chance to deliver the special effects for Dario Argento's Phenomena (a.k.a

"In Italy, if you wanted to become an FX artist, the guts n' gore business was where you put your money."

science happy celluloid-saboteurs have plenty of like-minded associates spread across the globe, situated particularly in places like Sweden, Norway, Germany and Britain. So bearing that in mind one really shouldn't be too surprised to learn that any a handful of dedicated splatter aficionados have heard of people like Sergio Stivaldi, Romano Porcospino, Giuseppe De Rada and others. Oh, maybe you've heard of their grisly handiwork, but thanks to the corrupt censors, you've never got a fair chance at watching their stuff in action, so to speak.

Creeping — the butchered U.S. version of the film and I was very satisfied. Argentina was of course very big and famous in Italy already at the time.

"Before that," Sergio continues in surprisingly good English, "I had been experimenting on my own as far as special effects were concerned. I am totally self taught. For a while I was very much into space movies. Star Wars and movies like that, you know, and I also built little miniature of spaceships. But in Italy, at least in the past, horror films were THE main issue in interesting, and if you wanted to become an FX artist — and to get to work in that field — the guys in gore business was where you had to put your money. That's why I too got going doing those gore effects. It was just a natural turn for me. And really, I don't mind at all. I have always been very interested in horror movies — well, I do love them — so when I got to be involved in making them too, I simply couldn't be happier. And again, working for Dario already that early in my career, was fantastic.

After working for Argento on *Phenomena*, Sergio Savastelli took his bloody toolbox to the set of *Demons* and turned this violent tale of terror directed by Lamberto Bava and produced by Argento into a gruesomely explicit jaw-dropping splatter feast that amazed horror buffs everywhere. Thanks to the film's heavy FX, *Demons* turned out to become a major success at the box office, especially in the south of Europe.

"The transformation scene is arguably the best effect I have created as of yet," says Savastelli. "It wasn't all that complicated to perform, but the effect turns out very well, very realistic on the big screen when I look back on all of my previous work. I'm still very pleased — and proud — of what we accomplished in *Demons*.

Savastelli also handled the FX — together with Renato Fressipino — in Bava's *Demons 2* released in 1987, but for various reasons neither Bava nor Savastelli managed to repeat the immediate success of the original movie.

"Personally, I wasn't happy with the film at all," Savastelli admits. "I felt that they screwed it up in the editing room while editing the film. It just lacks continuity."

In the States, *Demons 2* bombed for another reason too. Thanks to the MPAA who forced the distributors to cut out most of the explicit scenes in order to secure an "R" rating. Savastelli also reveals that he is very happy with his work in Argento's prestige Michele Soavi's horror film, *The Church*.

"The enormous mechanical demon that we provided for the film is another highlight of my career as a make up artist and I regard this work right up there with the *Demons* FX. This giant demon is also the most technically advanced prop I have created as of yet," Savastelli says.

"I wasn't happy with *Demons 2* at all. They screwed it up in the editing room. It lacks continuity."

"But when I see what my American colleagues have accomplished in the FX field, I can't say that I'm too impressed with my own work," Sergio says modestly.

The Americans are so advanced and so clever, way ahead of the rest of us," Savastelli goes on. "I love to watch their major. Rick Baker's 'ape suit' in *Greystrike*, for instance, are probably the best FX I have ever seen.

Apart from minor contributions for a film shooting in Cuba, Sergio Savastelli has got to work outside Italy, but he has no hopes and dreams.

"Naturally, I would just love to work in the USA," he says. "I think that in what all Italian (European) make up artists dream of. But the competition is so tough over there."

"That's again, you never know, do you? Maybe someone will use my work in a film and like it enough to offer me a job in an American production," Savastelli laughs.

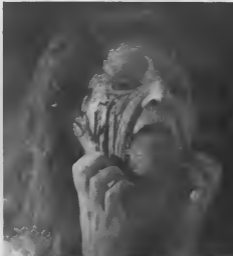
He speaks openly about his past, present and future, and talks enthusiastically about a trip he made to the States not long ago.

"It was fantastic," he remembers. "Stepping into a place like Rick Baker's studio was like entering another dimension. Rick is marvelous and probably the best all-around FX artist in the business today.

"Besides a most interesting visit to the TLM studio, I also got to meet with people like Tim Smith and Chris Smith."

Savastelli admits that he hopes that his visit to the USA eventually will open up some doors for him there. And why not? The man has proven his skills more than once, at least over here in Europe. In the States, the censors made sure that nobody caught his talents in the hacked-up version of Argento's *Phenomena* / *Creeping*, but if that ahead version of *Opera* — an uncut version — actually turns up uncut in the USA, people will sure as hell notice the Italian FX maestro.

And speaking of *Opera*, this controversial journey into the dark corners of a bloodsoaked Italian opera house — the film also turned out to become a nightmare for everyone involved, even behind the cameras. Director Dario Argento had his fair share of accidents and mishaps. Sergio Savastelli — who provided the FX for the film — also recalls that working on the set was a daunting experience. Humour has it that Argento wasn't at all that happy with Savastelli's work, but he now seems too eager to dwell on the subject anymore.



The Ghoul

Whatever happened during the making of *Greystoke* has been buried in the past and both Argento and Scola's still work together. In one way or another Scola's has recently completed the FX for another horror film, called *La Bestia*, directed by Michele Soavi and produced by Argento. One also feels that despite whatever discussion (about

"Rick Baker's ap.-suits in *Greystoke* are probably the best FX I have ever seen."

"When I see what my American colleagues have accomplished, I can't say that I'm too impressed with my own work. They are so advanced and so clever, way ahead of the rest of us."



Argentina and Stivaletti still have the highest regard and respect for each other. In the now already legendary basement of Argentina's Profectus Rosso shop in Rome Sergio Stivaletti has displayed an impressive collection of props used in some of Argentina's most famous movies.

In the grandiose Chamber of Hysteria Stivaletti has reconstructed scenes from such classics as *Demone*, *Copie*, *Phantasma* and *The Church*—stuff guaranteed to make your eyes pop!

Talking to Stivaletti about horror movies and splatter FX, it is of course (absolutely) unavoidable not to bring up a certain subject—film censorship. Like Argentina, Stivaletti objects very strongly to all forms of censorship, and he can hardly believe my stories of the infamous Swedish censors.

"I cannot understand why you have to cut horror films," he says. "Horror films are just a joke, they are visions of fantasy! There are so many people who go watch horror movies only for the sake of exciting, mind-bending special effects. The people are curious and they want to be shocked, but when you get out the door, there's nothing."

At the moment, Sergio Stivaletti is hard at work, providing the effects for TV movie produced for Italian television and directed by Lucio Fulci, due to be aired around Christmas 1990.

"It's not a big production," Stivaletti reveals. "But I enjoy this kind of work too. It's a fantasy tale and I have been making some funny little props (aking fish, trees and various animals)."

"I don't mind working with splatter FX," he continues, "but sometimes the use of blood gets a little bit tedious and a little monotonous. I, for one, can well understand why Tom Savini, for instance, admits that he is tired of producing splatter FX. I too would mind doing other stuff for instance making effects for sci-fi movies. I love science-fiction films too."

"Once I was offered to supply the FX for a porno movie," Stivaletti laughs. "But I decided to decline the offer. I simply couldn't see where the challenge was."

Right, it's not that kind of flesh we want one of the most skilled and original FX artists in Europe to be messing with. His supreme talents shouldn't be wasted with latex cocks and fake cum. Sergio Stivaletti is a man for zombies, demons and other grating creatures of the dark. And he is available, so kick up, Susskind-based producers. Here's a man capable of scaring the skin off of anyone, and he's ready to bring the deep red stuff to your shores, too.

Creating Demons of Blood

HAND IT TO REMO

by Shane Dallman

Hi, nah Karna Williams. Remo D., comedian at large, at your service. The twelve of you who've managed to catch my act know me for one thing in particular. For the rest of you, I'll explain. My stage persona (ah! my offspring use, I admit) is equipped with an iron book instead of a right hand and delights in offering many forced explanations of how this came to be. It wasn't long before I started using clips from my favorite movies to illustrate these explanations.

Well, you know how those things work out. My casual quest for the best handless clips became an obsessive undertaking. As Tim Lincecum searches for Jess Franco, as Shane Dallman hunts for Paul Naschy, I look for anyone who'll give me a hand—and remove it!

Has that very old hand-less will do it: witness the Star Wars films, in which Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker take turns looking off each other's mutual exterminators with their light sabers. A quick flash of electric red or blue followed by the briefest glimpse of the lost hands flying away! Uhh, sorry, for why that doesn't cut it (you must definitely intended!) Where's the feeling? The emotional punch that makes you sit up and take notice? Something's missing here, but exactly what? That's what I'm here to find out.

The ideal place to begin this investigation is a listing of what I've found to be the greatest hand-less sequences in cinema history. But before I begin, there's something I feel compelled to acknowledge. Yes, I have seen *Demons!* (John's *Demons*, filmed in 1988, released in 1992). This endearing little effort features some after-noon-of-people-being-passioned-with-a-desire-to-remove-their-left-hands-and-achieving-such-methods-to-destroy-them-in-car-drama, hitting trains run over them, and forcing doctors to do it for them or go postal. That is, doesn't make the top five or more or less due to the

rather lackluster material in between the handlessings. If this doesn't sound like, here is word that the best hand-less scenes are capable of carrying entire movies! Nevertheless, *Demons!* rates an affectionate sixth in my book.

And now: **REMO'S LIST OF THE FIVE GREATEST HAND LOSS SCENES IN FILM HISTORY!** In chronological order, they are:

1. DAUGHTER OF HOONDOO (1961)

The closer set up. The dead men won't let go of the increasingly piece of jewelry, so thrust! Doesn't stop there, though—the psychologically tormented heroine will won't get the hand to let go, so she picks it up and takes it with her! But when the demons of her mind seem to be catching up, she doesn't want to be seen with it...so, when she poses a blind flower girl, she drops the hand in her basket! Disgusting!

2. ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN (1969)

Everyone remembers for him at least hand off the grand finale of this one, in which *Elle Klor* delivers a soul-searching monologue for a full minute or so after being impaled on a giant spider. But the prelude to this is every bit as outrageous. Fearing to control his monster, the Baron tries to protect himself behind an iron gate. The monster reaches the gate simultaneously, and slams it shut on the Baron's hand! With his wrist pushing like the *Rev-Fountain*, the pain-stricken Baron retrieves his hand and tries to force it back on—just by squeezing! When it becomes clear that this isn't going to work, he turns on his captive (*She Delusional*), hanging from the ceiling. The Baron angrily throws the hand of him, screaming "It's all your fault!" It's moments like this that can bring tears to your eyes.



VIDEODROME



DAVID L. LUBMAN
FOR ILLUSTRATION
BOOKS

CHAIR FOUR
FRANKENSTEIN

3. THE FLOOD (1980)

Well, of course—*that* film also qualifies on the basis of the subject matter alone. Director Oliver Stone sets this one up with an awe inspiring moment in which Michael Caine, shaking his fist outside the window of his car, abruptly recommends another vehicle going the other way—and passing too close for comfort. The result is scary, splashy, and simply wonderful.

4. DOCTOR DUTCHER, M.D. (1980)

Down to business here. The opening sequence (of the film proper, not the doctored-up title scenes) closely follows a mysterious man in black paying a late night visit to the morgue. He knows what he wants, and it's a hard—no more, no less. We get to watch, up close and personal, as his blade slices through the donor's veins, while the soundtrack begins with the clean squeak of the first few strokes and gradually develops through the harsh thud in check in check of the "hard parts" and the final, satisfying snap of completion. The mystery man holds his trophy up for all to see, and then carefully

place it in a plastic baggie. This scene was obviously meant as a message for George Lucas—a message reading "That is how it's done."

A VIDEOGEMME (1983)

This David Cronenberg masterpiece has more intelligence and food for thought per frame than almost anything else you can name. But it also features the scene in which Max Rieux (Steven Wood) opens up his abdomen to receive a living, breathing colonoscopy from his treacherous partner Marlon (Peter Onorati). Things get a bit sticky when Marlon attempts to remove his hand from said opening. The result makes it look as if Max had a Vig O-Meter installed in his guts, along with an alarm, as Marlon comes away with a ticking time bomb fused to his throated stump (all together now: "a hand grenade!"). Okay, so it's a video hallucination, but it sure doesn't play that way on screen. "See you in Pittsburgh!"

Well, that's the top five—mine, anyway. But we've got lots more to explore. Let's see how long we can keep this column going. You have a favorite "hard" movie. I know you do. Think about it. Remember it. Write it down. And hand it to Israel.



SHAUN HUTSON

THE SECRET OF HIS EXCESS!

by John Martin

With thanks to CREEPING UNKNOWN editor Mick Casner for his assistance

"This is: are you get along out of a peash hole?" greets me Shaun Hutson, stuffing salad up his nose. Conversation has turned to the point in 19.00.00, the novel of monstrous middle Northern that took started his notorious career into life where a character's head explodes in a hotel restaurant after his reckless consumption of a lettuce leaf impregnated with slug eggs. Apologising for his inability to re-arrange that image further, Shaun is doing the next best thing. Our immediately disoriented and beguiled fellow diners in this particular peash Manchester hotel are valiantly continuing their attention to their own plates (bread reserve you are) but no doubt if they were aware of the book with which the leather jacketed butler belted down with the shades over his eyes and the celery up his nose has made his name ("And that name is John Martin"), including *SPAWN* (perhaps an escaped axe murderer against a psychotic burnt Indian under the telepathic control of runaway vampire attention), *WORMS* (in which a baby gets more worms) and *ASSASSIN* (in which a parasite for men ejaculates maggots into the mouth of the hapless woman who is blowing him). They'd be clamping each other underneath in their beds to get to the next.

The feast of *Blanchley* is smaller than you expect, but energetic and muscular: the bulgingiceps attributable to long hours playing the drums (though Hutson himself offers an altogether more plausible and obscure explanation for the physical attribute). His first passions are Heavy Metal Music (he is a fully paid-up Iron Maiden groupie) and Liverpool F.C. soccer team ("My criteria for working are these: as long as I've got a love for a full squad of 11 players, there's plenty of money coming in, I'm healthy and my family's happy, that's it. I'm happy") and it's actually a bit of a struggle diverting them from these pursuits to any discussion of the work. When you do manage it, the conversation is "getting too deep". Hutson thought all



Shaun looking "hard"

"Reading one of my books is like going to a heavy rock gig...there's the same relentless feeling..."

excellent entertaining companion. The difficult interview. The (perhaps) inevitable being labeled as "perforative" which is the charge he lays at the door of so many of his contemporaries. The actor for whom it matched only by the amount of self-deprecating wit he aims at himself, which has to disguise his fierce pride in his craft. The upshot of these contradictions is that Mulick remains an extraordinarily enjoyable read for any with such sophisticated views (not to mention healthy self-regard).

Mulick is a passionately neglected figure in America. Although the difficult flag waving of my esteemed GQ/RED editor or his deputy, clearly known as the man whose novel formed the basis of Jean-Pierre L  ves's winner of the 2005 THE MONTE SINGO prize from the defunct World Allot to Ophelia in Britain, a Steiner side push for his work is being planned. But when I spoke to him, he was mourning missed opportunities.

SH: Do you ever publishing my stuff in the States I stopped, am with Felix because they were paying peanuts. The agent I used to have said that they were trying to buy Felix so I said "Tell him to fuck off!"

JM: Does Felix represent the start of a new phase in your writing?

SH: Yeah, I agree with you on that. It's not saying I consciously sat down and thought "I'm gonna go in a new direction" because I didn't do that. But there's only so much pleasure you can get out of writing about bloody slugs. Is it still? You can put characters in a situation where they're being chased by slugs, but they're not going to have much trouble run running them. Are they? No more slugs! People are always begging me to write Slugs III but I won't do it. Even if they offered half a million. I'd be very reluctant to do it. The second stage beat, the "Shogun Dream" represented the end of a two final phase in my writing career.

JM: I see that around the time of Felix you were getting into a bit of a rut with that "embarrassment of a small town go like and due to ecological disaster" or black image, or whatever? Story line said that you got yourself out of that with Victoria.

SH: Spoken, Victoria's particular, Anissa and Shadow are all meant to be more like Whodunnit. I mean, with Square. I haven't met anyone yet who had figured out who the killer was, which is nice... and also with Felix, I only anyone to identify his murderer in that. I suppose to a certain extent the characters are just

overrun/toddler... slug/toddler... microwave toddler in Victoria but Victoria does take a different direction and the overall comes out in hardback in October over here. Anissa is totally different again it's got the broad body-count of anything I've ever done. But it's got a lot of heavier atmosphere, the most depressing book I've ever written.

JM: You're totally about this one.

SH: I couldn't talk about it. Still can't. So what the hell that, which I'm not happy at. As you know, but it's true.

JM: Did writing it get screaming out of your system?

SH: When I finished it I knew it was either the best thing I'd ever done or the biggest load of crap I'd ever done. I suspected the former, but I wasn't sure. Then my editors hung up and said it was far better than anything they'd seen in the last five years, not just in terms but from anyone else, and I thought "fuckin' hell!" But for Anissa (now out in Britain and called Hemogeddon). Well, I've got to get back into the state of mind I was in before I wrote Anissa, which was very personal. A lot of things that happened at that time happened to me... the character in it is me, which is why I can't really talk about it. The new hardback Anissa is the quickest paced thing I've ever done out of control. It's a no-way-out slugs go it. I was worried when I finished it. I wrote so fast. It'd be to think that breathlessness (or even) isn't the writer's friend. I feel that reading one of my books is like going to a heavy rock gig. There's the same relentless feeling to both of them. When somebody finishes one of my books they should be drained and exhausted. Just as they would be after a great rock concert. They should go "Whew! That was great!"

JM: Do you settle this stuff off in a frenzy?

SH: I sit down and think "Oh Christ! Another day of this! Why did I ever give up that job at McDonald's? (Laughs) No. Actually, I get there every day in my office, which is the spare bedroom for tax reasons,

"I sent it to the editors and they said, 'The only way we're going to get it through is to cut out all of the blasphemy and change the orifices...' "

and I work 9-4, five days a week. I spend 2 or 3 months researching every book, which is why I can write them so quickly. I've got all my notes laid out and I've got my cast list in front of me, in case someone's your character's position I'm under the left eye to under the right eye during the course of the book, what colour hair they've got, what sort of car they've got. Cars are the most difficult thing for me because I don't drive. I was once writing a 150 m.p.h. car chase between a Chevrolet and a Capri, and someone said to me, "You can't do that in a Capri!" Shit took 25 days. Branding Grounds was 14, the novelisation of The Terminator only took 10. Shadow at 48 days was the longest, and that included rewrites. The most I put down was 400 words. The first is done quickly and I send it to the editor and he tells me what's wrong with it, then I put it right. That's all I can work any other way. I work at such a high emotional pitch that I can't sustain interest in anything for longer than two months at a time. Holidays are rare.

"Clive Barker called me irresponsible after I told him about Chainsaw Terror. I actually managed to shut him up for a couple of seconds, which is no mean feat."

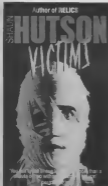
JM: In *Spore* you've got the escaped axe murderer, plus the psychotic bunnies eating, not to mention the telepathic vampire shysters. (Hutson laughs) and there's no way it should work, but it does, and you say that the story is based on real life events!

SH: Yeah, my inspiration for that one came from a newspaper story about a German hospital porter who couldn't bring himself to burn abortions, so he buried them in a shallow grave behind the hospital! But it was a difficult book to research, trying to get doctors and nurses to talk about abortions. I got quite friendly with a porter at the local hospital and he told me what they do with things like that. Making was very difficult too, they very nearly didn't let me into Scotland Yard's Black Museum. I'd gone down looking very smart, I actually found a tie somewhere to put on.

JM: Did it give you any good ideas for *Victims*?

SH: The only idea it gave me was that I wasn't gonna be able to use it in the bloody book, because the original idea for *Victims* was that there was going to be someone taking exhibits from the Black Museum and using them in murders. But when I got there and saw how impossible it was to get stuff out, the Black Museum became redundant. But it got me in there to have a good look around, which is what I really wanted. I like to keep at least one part of my stories rooted in reality, it gives the reader something to hold onto. The horror may be in my imagination, but the basis of it is in fact. For instance, there are believe it or not three species of flesh eating slugs in this country. There

"I'm hated by 99% of the horror authors because I don't give a shit about their self-congratulatory, back slapping scene."



didn't actually much research to do for *Dogs and Breeding Ground* because all I had to do was to do and read what it is that dogs do. Obviously something like *Shadows* involved a lot more research -- I learned to read hand cards for that one. And the disease porphyria, as described in *Enthus*, actually affects one person in every 10,000.

JM: What about ideas that come from the reality of your own life?

SH: There are three people in *Breeding Ground* that die horribly -- who are real people. Two of them were guys that burgled houses. There are very few people that I truly detest, aside from Thatcher, who I feel like with a penknife, but I suppose I did use *Breeding Ground* as a revenge novel. The only way someone usually gets into one of my books is if they ask, "they want to be a writer, and I think it's so obvious of the people in Victorian real people." My inspiration for that book was the song "Guy Fawkes is typically the Advent." I know this guy who wrote the lyrics to that and there are a lot of in-jokes in *Victims*, so there is in all my work, there are plenty of jokes in there, if you can spot 'em.

Someone once described something I'd written as the ultimate in black comedy. There's nothing waging with that, you know that from watching comedy horror films. If there's no natural safety valve in a horror film or a horror book, it sends the audience home to laugh in all the wrong places. In *Enthus* there was no safety valve in that, so the place where everyone laughed was where the girl blew up all over the place. Now I don't find that particularly funny. Just as an example I use. The shark's head appears, and everyone goes "Wuuuuh!" and then Ray Schneider says, "I think we're gonna need a bigger boat," and everyone cracks up laughing. If you're gonna spend four pages describing something, then the readers are going to not eat. They need something to lighten it up, poor bastard! But my stuff is obviously very strong, too. It's been cut -- I usually is -- everything I've ever written has had stuff taken out somewhere.

JM: Any notable passages that you can remember?

SH: Well, there's a very long hemiphrase sequence in *Shadows* which was trimmed. I just went into a lot more detail than I needed in, probably because I was quite enjoying it. (Laughs) Actually I thought worked about a guy who keeps writing to me. He lives opposite a graveyard, and every time a woman gets buried in there, he writes to me to tell me what he's going to do with her.

JM: Is it true that you censored yourself on *Pelosi*?

SH: No, I didn't what happened was that the black mess sequence had blasphemy in it as well as all the nasty business with goats and stuff. One black mess sequence in particular was about eight pages long, really bad, really over the top, even I was disgusted when I was writing it. So I sent it into the editors and they said, "the only way we're going to get it through is to cut out all the blasphemy and change the officers" because it was really bad. The petty killing sequence in *Shadows* was heavily cut, too.

JM: I've heard rumors that copies of the original *Chansur Terror* manuscript are changing hands at £15 a throw in Birmingham.

SH: That's right, and I don't see a bloody penny of it! That's a waste of time, and I use the term loosely denigrated. *Chansur Terror* is the only one of my pseudonymous novels that I got into. What happened with that one was, I did a novelisation of *The Terminator* for W. H. Allen... I won't do novelisations as a rule, but I would have liked to do the one for *Shakespeare*. Anyway, they tried to get the rights for me to do a novelisation of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. The rights were too expensive, so instead they said to me, "Just do us the most over-the-top novel featuring chainsaws that you can do." I did it in 25 days, sent it in, and two days later I got a phone call saying, "We're going to have to cut it because we didn't think anyone could go quite as far over the top as you've gone!" W.H. Smith, the biggest chain in the country, still banned it anyway, simply because it featured the word "chansur" in the title which meant we had to scrap plans for two parquets, *Chansur Blood-Drift* and *Chansur Slaughter* (laughs). *Chansur Terror* has been re-issued under the title *Come the Night*, and they went to put my name on it, but I won't let them unless they re-issues the book.

Even on account of all that that Dave Barker called me inappropriate. I actually managed to shut him up for a couple of seconds, which is no mean feat. I was on a panel discussion and questioned answer thing and someone asked me if I'd ever been anything out and I said yeah. *Chansur Terror*. They asked me to tell them what was cut, and I did. It was a scene where a woman gets nailed to a wall through the nipples cut off and is then raped with a chainsaw. Of *Come* was speechless after that.

JM: So how unique is the relationship between you and the likes of Dave Barker and Ramsey Campbell?

SH: It's not not at all. Campbell knows what I've said. And I know what he's said. The next time we meet I'll say, "Alright" and Dave Barker can get all of America to make 60 times before the end of the year,

good luck to him – just don't ask me to watch any of it.

JM: Do you all get on OK when you meet up for panels or whatever?

SH: No. I hate their guts! (laughing) The whole point is that I'm hated by 50% of the horror authors, because I don't give a shit about their self-congratulatory backslapping scene – with the sole, and very notable, exception of James Herbert, because he's got exactly the same attitude about the business as I have. It used to irritate me when people said I was ripping him off. We're from different generations. That might give you some idea of the age gap. They were passing The Plots Around in the playground when I was at school. It was considered pretty hot stuff then. I mean there was what... eight years between Plot and Slugs. Guy R. Korth had already done all the ripping off I am now going to be doing. I mean the about line for *Night of the Underworld* is I remember comedy "in the tradition of The Plot" – they target to ads "except that Plot is better". That was the trick I had made me think maybe I could get horror published. I mean it was so very bad that it would give anyone hope that all that anxiety stuff started out like others, not me. I love it when they have a go at me, but they've got to expect to get some back. Some people can dish it out but they can't take it, and if someone calls me irresponsible, especially if I'm doing right next to them, I'm not gonna ignore it. But I've reached the point where I'm completely impervious to criticism. You walk a fine line between ego and self-hatred in this business, and it's very difficult to know where to draw the line between the two. I don't think I'm a big-headed bastard, but I know from the beginning I was good at what I do because a hell of a lot of people buy my books. I don't read Kim Newman's say "This man is a godawful writer" which is what he said after reading *Veritas*. I think anyone who walks around in a knee-deep rut with a wash cloth and a tattered hat is a terminal case-hole, quite honestly.

JM: Ramsey Campbell did a review of *Shivering Ground* in which he said basically "This is the second worst Hutton that written about slugs." The only problem with that is that slugs can't do much except be disgusting. Therefore, much the same could be said for Hutton."

SH: (laughing) I haven't heard his one before – that's good. But you know what good is a brilliant review if you only sell 20,000 paperback? The public are the most discerning critics. Herbert's got the right idea. It isn't all about entertainment. I think if someone pays good money for a book, the least you can do is entertain the hell

JM: Is it true that even you were gassed out by NEKROMANTIK?

SH: Yeah, I saw it straight. I just couldn't believe it. I sat there like (adopts wide-eyed, slack-jawed expression) I'm not kidding! About three-quarters of the way through I nudged my wife, who was sleeping and said "This is a seriously dodgy movie!" Then somebody said to me afterwards "Do you want to meet the director?" and I said "No fuckin' way!" That film really fucked the drive.

"I saw *Nekromantik* and afterwards somebody said, 'Do you want to meet the director?' and I said, 'No fuckin' way!'"



The master of pulse-pounding, head-banging horror

"The chief enemy of creativity is 'good taste' "

Pablo Picasso

"Every mind-bending, horrifying, nauseating detail"

a character in *SLUGS*

A long running controversy in the field of horror fiction has centered on the relative merits of understated, suggestive horror, which leaves it to the reader's imagination to fill in the gaps (the "what you don't see is scarier than what you do see" school) and the full-to-the-wall, spare-the-reader-nothing shock tactics espoused by successive generations of young Turks, most recently by certain American authors abroad the name-dropping "Splatterpunk" bandwagons. Britain's Steven Huxton leaves no devoted readership and the critics he so loves to bait in no doubt as to which side of the ideological divide he resides on. In evidence: consider the following passage from his 1988 novel *Victims*:

"The baby's body began to shudder violently as my skin finally turned a blood red. Its mouth opened as if it were screaming for help, but all that came forth was a flooding flow of dark-brown fluid and bubbling pus which gushed from its throbbing orifice as if it had been some gigantic hole squeezed and milked by invisible fingers. There was a loud and nauseating plip as the entire body burst like a corpulent balloon, the whole figure exploding in a cracking, liquidous wonder of corruption. The streaming mass splattered the reader of the scene . . ."

Or again, take -- no, full blown horror from *Antennae* (also 1988):

"With a eyes bulged nearly in their sockets as she felt her mouth fill to bursting point. Her cheeks swelled as she struggled to retain the corollation but then she realized that her mouth was filled not with fluid but with dozens of tiny objects. Objects which were moving. Twisting and turning on her tongue. She sat back as the pressure on her neck was released, her mouth opening wide.

The maggots poured from it as a sickly white current and as she looked down she saw that the worms were still jerking, still squaring, propelling the white manuremass from the gland in a thick fountain. Some had already found their way down her throat despite the vomit which now rushed from her stomach and gushed from her mouth, carrying with it hordes of the parasites.

Beginning to get the picture? Huxton himself puts it like this: "Horror with a capital H is what I do best". For what's sampled his work

would disagree. Having identified the much terrifying, universal fears (e.g. about fire, eye damage, harassment, loss of control, and for the safety of our children, the wholenessness of the food we eat, etc.) Huxton grabs his reader by the scruff of the neck and slaps them down in front of him, ruthlessly, relentlessly forcing him to endure them, always with the greatest possible degree of realism. A stickler for accuracy Huxton takes his cue from one of his favourite idols, Stan Robinson, never letting anyone else beautifully. But the overwhelming efforts of this confrontational approach are generally mitigated by a winking line of black humor and sense of humoriness that finds its counterpoint in the author's own self-deprecating personality. Although Huxton was jokingly expressed an intention to have someone die of shock while reading one of his books, the reader is just as likely to be laughing, but whether laughing or winking ribs, Huxton is always out to entertain the reader, and has little time for what he sees as the pretensions of some of his contemporaries.

Ever the workaholic "Bad Boy of Horror", Huxton owns the horror "in crowd", finding himself to have none of an affinity with the world of Heavy Metal, where he is revered as a rock figure. "I feel that reading my books is like going to a heavy rock gig," he has said, "There's the same mindless feeling to both of them. I'd like to think that when somebody finishes one of my books they'll be drained and exhausted, just as they would be after a great rock concert. They should go "Wham! That was great!" The motto is frequently etched on the pages of his books, and here from it can be found peering for position with the likes of R.D. Laing, Shelley, Shakespeare and Tennessee, even quotations from the Bible.

As well as a whole host of mostly pseudonymous pseudonyms, over novels, film reviews, etc., this prolific writer has managed to produce 10 major, best-selling horror novels in less than a decade.

By John Martin

JM: You must have some horror stories to tell about your own involvement in the movies, specifically in Juan Piquer Simon's *Slugs* — *The Movie*.

SH: I remember saying in an interview once, "It's not interested in what they do with my book [in the screen]; is it true to my artistic vision?" I don't care about it. As long as they give me a huge amount of cash, they can make a comedy out of it, they like it." Then that Simon bible comes along and takes the entire book word. I believe two members of the cast walked out and some of the crew were tempted when the stage-hands started throwing shovel-loads of live slugs around the set. There's going to be a sequel, which was tentatively titled *Slugs 2* — *The Plague*, but now it's back to *Breeding Ground*. They asked me if I'd like to be involved with the screenplay, but I thought, "fuck that!" because it turns out to be a flop. I can stand back from it, whereas if people thought it was brilliant then I could say "well of course it's brilliant, it's based on my brilliant book." If it was something like a film version of *Spenser*, say, or *Indiana*, I would be more interested. It's not stopping *Slugs* off because it's still my biggest seller, but I feel it's less representative of what I write than the likes of *Spenser*, *Indiana*, *Shadowlands* and my latest stuff. I would insist on writing any screen adaptations of *Victory*, *Assassins* or *Hamlets*.

JM: If *Breeding Ground* happens, will it be another "P. Smith movie"?

SH: Probably yeah, and again I will take no responsibility for what might ensue there on that screen. I just hope they exclude the scene of the toilet laughing! They'll have to, or they'll lose the entire *Freudian* sub-text of the story, won't they?

JM: So which horror films do you like?

SH: Tend to read more mainstream stuff, and times would vary. Present day horror films leave a lot to be desired, really. I still rate the early Hammer stuff because they had style. What have you got

"...two members of the cast walked out and some of the crew were tempted when the stage-hands started throwing shovel-loads of live slugs around the set."



renewals? The *Freudian* 15th series is just an excuse for how many pubescent kids you can kill in an hour and a half... dear me! It sounds like contradiction, bearing in mind the way I write, but I go along with the old line about what you don't see being more scary than what you do see, and that's why *Alan* still scares the shit out of me, much more so than its over-rated sequel.

JM: I'm glad I'm not the only person on the panel who believes the original to be a far better film.

SH: *Alan* for me was just *Hambo-in-Chief* *Spenser*. The one thing that James Cameron did better than Ridley Scott was the old "cameras prowling down dark corridors" bit. *Alan* could have done with some help of that, but is it's up there with *Tear-Driver* and *The Wild Bunch*, the two greatest movies I ever saw. One of the reasons I don't watch much horror is that I wouldn't want to be subconsciously influenced. Actually, I would think the chances of me being influenced by someone like Lucio Fulci are pretty slim.

Some gender who runs a fanzine recently asked me to review *The Gates of Hell* by him, and after I'd watched it a couple of times, there was no way I could do a serious review of it.

JM: Have you seen *Fiddler's Hearts*?

SH: No.

JM: There's a scene in that one where a schoolgirl is eaten by slugs and snails.

SH: Distasteful I have to say! [Laughs] Another reason I'm not too keen on modern horror films, or novels for that matter, is that the writers keep on toting out the best old stuff I like you just don't care! There's no reason that you should have some damsel in distress who's only there so you can send the hero down some dark passageway to get her, y'know, which is why it always irks and makes the women a lot more powerful in my books than they are elsewhere in the genre. Thugee – in the interview I just did with *Penthouse*, the guy was saying that maybe I've been an influence on some of the young, up-and-coming talents... the only problem is, I can't see any of these up-and-coming talents. I mean, where are they?

JM: So we won't be seeing any glowing testimonials from Susan Hutton on book, jackets for the foreseeable future?

SH: No, I won't do endorsements. W. H. Allen have sent me copies of stuff to endorse, but I won't do it. I was sent a copy of Olive Barker's *Whorehouse* and the endorsement I sent back was "This chap-ple ought to

travels straight out." They didn't use it, funny enough. I can't do that stuff, because I don't get to call my hero out. Every horror novel you pick up these days has something saying, "This is the finest novel I've read since last week – *Stephen King*." *Stephen King* has done a couple of times, but he tends to let it. *Stephen King* is a different proposition, though, isn't he, because he's an American... yanks talk for shit like that.

JM: What will you be doing in ten years time?

SH: I sincerely hope that I won't be doing anything different... just making loads of money out of what I write. I would hope by then that all of my books will have been turned into films, preferably decent ones, although I won't care, as long as they've paid me enough. I'll have a crack at anything there is a market for. If there's enough money to be made, I'll have a go. I've been toying with the idea of writing a children's horror novel – what could be more frightening than some of those fairy stories? *Hearst* and *Conan* could be updated to modern day New York with kids taken three blocks away from their home and abandoned. But the greatest stuff of all is *Moody Shakespeare*!

JM: Your U.K. fans are extremely supportive – do you enjoy meeting them at conventions?

SH: When I turn up, people flock to me and say "Hi, that's what a writer looks like, there must be hope for all of us!" When they write to me they get a letter back, which they wouldn't from most authors, but I reply to all my mail. They get a letter from a guy who writes quite reasonable, who took the time to write back. That's the least I can do. It makes me seem more normal.

THE STRANGE CASE OF RUGGERO DEODATO

From Cannibals to Compromise in 10 Easy Years

by Chas. Bahun

It seems as though the world can never quite forgive Italian director Ruggero Deodato for making *Cannibal Ferox* (1971). Though arguably *The Greatest Cannibal Movie Ever Made*, its rauced reputation as a ferociously vile and uncompromisingly bleak schlock epic remains intact to this day. And, judging by Deodato's recent cinematic output, he has been paying some pretty heavy-duty penance in return for his sins.

It's like the *Atlanta Interceptors* (1980), *The Barbarians* (1982), or *Dead Help* (1983) are any indication of his future direction, it wouldn't be all that surprising to see a new Deodato open pop-corn comedy as a specialty-show, prime-time TV Movie of the Week. Deodato has come a long way, to be sure, but all too often, recent efforts appear to be cinematic apologies for the "crimes" of his past.

It could well be that Deodato has mellowed with age and is quite willing to compromise in favor of steady work, bigger budgets, better actors and wider distribution. Though both *Phantom of Death* (1980) and *Dead Help* retain some of Deodato's macabre, aggressive directorial flair, it is quite clear that he has begun a new chapter in his filmmaking career... Gone is the mass spouted, shocking brutality, relentless masochism, and world-without-hope existence of his previous efforts, but in their stead, we have cheap sleazebags, campy-charming, mama-brand actors and flaky, but empty in-joke-cumers noodlings.

Perhaps on some professional and economic level Deodato's career has flourished, but the genre has suffered because such a highly talented, independent voice has been stifled.

Though *Cannibal Ferox* is all deserving of its notorious reputation, it remains a work of

unparalleled power and vision. It rises above its simplistic, exploitation origins and presents a harrowing, multi-faceted adventure that inevitably probes ever deeper into man's propensity for violence and self destruction. An spectacularly pandering as the film becomes at times, there always remains an undeniable element of truth and a persistence of vision that is almost impossible to dismiss.

Deodato may have made the Ultimate Jungle Chastityhouse with *Cannibal Ferox*, but beneath the frothing blood and steaming gore lies a film that could be safely regarded as the *Apocalypse Now* of the subgenre. But just as Francis Ford



/ MUNDO CARNEL /
/ MUNDO SALVAGE /

Coppola learned from the belated nightmare of *Colt Remains' people* referred to the chaotic, semi-its playground world of *One From the Heart*, as has Dardato's *Notorious* has been heart of darkness for *Atlantic* *hydroplane* and *The Barbarians*?

Perhaps both *Blowup* are heading the gentle advancement toward a task of the unknown by Friedrich Nietzsche, "The useful not to start too long into the abyss, for it will begin to stare back."

In fact, Dardato's continued his explorations of the untold beauty of the human jungle for several years after *Conquered Holocaust* with both *Cal and Ron* (1964) *Unfame in direct / Straight to Hell* and *Money on the Edge of the Park* (1964) marking the apparent end of his Personal Screen Period. After that, films bearing his name could scarcely be distinguished from the plethora of other

wrong genre offerings that flooded the marketplace in the mid-60's. Dardato still married and on occasionally quality, without point-of-view, but by the time *Cal and Ron* arrived on these shores, it was quite clear that the holy fire had departed.

Although it was previously reported that Dardato was considering a return to the "Grain Inform" with a proposed sequel *Conquered Holocaust II*, it now appears that the only film bearing that name will be the dispiringly retitled *Marie Curie's jungle-geek romp* *White Slave* (1964).

For now, as a genre force, Dardato must be considered as missing in action. It is a loss worth mourning, too. Despite the fact that Dardato was often lumped together with other Italian opportunists like Bruno Mattei (*Night of the Zombies*), Umberto Lenzi (*Cannibal Frenzy*), Joe D'Amato (*Trop Them and Kill Them* and 1,000 other titles), and Sergio Martino (*Island of the Monks*), Dardato, it was quite obvious from the start that Dardato was no hack director. His cinematic roots lay not so much with the cheap third-tier-back school of filmmaking popularized by his contemporaries, but rather with the classical approach espoused by his early mentor, the prolific and highly regarded Italian maestro Roberto Rossellini (*Germany Year Zero* (1947), *Wages of Love* (1948), *The Rule of Louis XIV* (1949)). Dardato's cinema wrote technique used so effectively in *Conquered Holocaust II*, in fact, a natural outgrowth of Rossellini's revolutionary neorealist style employed in such early works as *Open City* (1945), *Germany Year Zero*, and *Paisan* (1946).

Rossellini's raw, unvarnished film showing European ruins smoldering in the ashes of World War II initially shocked audiences unaccustomed to such frank and forthright portrayals of man's brutal reality. *Open City* (*Roma City opens*) is generally credited as the first neorealist work of this period for its documentary-like tale of the Gestapo tracking down, torturing, and killing various members of the Communist resistance. Based on true events, the film used actual locations and employed various nonprofessional actors in order to maintain its powerful, naturalistic tone.

Rossellini was a prodigious talent, directing for the stage and screen, as well as for film and Italian TV and working right up to his death at age 71 in 1977. Rossellini is also remembered for his scandalous affair with Swedish born-actress Ingrid Bergman, a liaison that produced a son and two daughters, one of whom is Isabelle Rossellini of *Blue Velvet* fame.



After his tenure with RKO/Lois, Deodato's directional career began unexpectantly with such films as *Conquest*, a taped, medium-budget girl thriller that showed little of the powerful, assured style he showcased shortly thereafter with *The Last Cannibal World* (1970) (*Ultimo Mondo Cannibale*, *The Last Survivor*, *Jungle Holocaust*). Apparently based on a true account of an oil company expedition that discovers a stone-age tribe living in isolation on Mindanao Island, *The Last Cannibal World* is a riveting, compelling adventure tale that established Deodato as a talent to be reckoned with. Co-starring Massimo Fusillo, along with two Deodatos and Mr. Mc Lay (who both appeared in *White-Water Women's War* [1969] *White Water Survival*), *Cannibal World* provides an early blueprint for the real Holocaust to come. Despite being an adventure/thriller more closely akin to Cornell Wilde's *White Frenzy* (1967), Deodato unflinchingly presents ritualistic animal attack footage, cannibalism and other scenes of barbarity that quickly set this film apart from others in the subgenre. A high-water mark for aerial dog graphics on screen (action scenes near the climax when Mr. Mc Lay is split open from crutch to stomach and her guts are scooped out and replaced by burning hot coals for riding and sliding as the escape of the white outlander) Umberto Lenzi shamelessly stole this scene for inclusion in his own *Seven Alive* by the Cannibals / *Jungle Holocaust* (1968). Lay's shocking assassination gives full warning of Deodato's nascent film credo—the no mercy / no prisoners stuff that will be taken to extremes in *Cannibal Holocaust*.

Teaming up again with *Cannibal World* screenwriter Gianfranco Chiari (who also wrote *Home on the Range of the Park*), Deodato set out to knock the subgenre on its ear by making a film that actually attempts to condemn the exploitation of Third World cultures. Deodato poured himself into a career here because *Cannibal Holocaust* remains a semi-sensationalist pulp show whose moral message has a distinctly flat, lousy sound. The ambiguity of this unkeyed lot of moral posturing is nearly summed up in the climax when, after viewing strictly Indian footage of a doomed Amazonian expedition, the central character mutters, "I wonder who the real cannibals are."

Come on, Rogers. They're the painted and modified, grunting little savages who've just ripped apart the entire cast and walked down their guts/ *Cannibals* as metaphor cannot work in a film that so gloriously wallows in violence and brutality while simultaneously earning judgment on what filmmakers whose actions appear no less reprehensible than Deodato's. While Deodato films another movie crew killing animals in scenes, that



he not kill them just as dead as his fictional counterparts? His head is thick of Deodato and his own as merely superior bumps after watching 90 minutes of actual animal slaughter, repellent gang rapes, graphic castrations, and rampant, gratuitous nudity.

Many critics of the film have apparently missed the "message" of *Cannibal Holocaust* and still see only the vile, barbaric exploitation of the natives, the animals, and the audience.

Deodato further complicates matters by including sequences that are awfully hard to discuss as special effects trickery and movie-making "magic." The documentary-like footage of the fictional film shown in the New York screening room in *The Last Road to Hell* contains scenes of bloody battles, murders, and mass executions that look impressively real. Even some of the special effects sequences have been called into question. In the scene where the film crew finds a native girl impaled from her mouth as a huge stake, several conflicting accounts have been offered in explanation. Some say the girl is merely eating on a small, hidden wooden post with a holes wood prep in her mouth, while others respond in an elliptical fashion that further obfuscates the scene. Umberto Lenzi, who was part of Deodato's crew at the time, reportedly refused to be on set for the sequence and has maintained a strict silence about what really happened.

The film ignited a storm of controversy upon its release—legal action was threatened, prints were destroyed in a fire of suspicious origin, and many countries refused to show it at all. Still in the

day, some dozen years after its initial appearance, *Conquered Wilderness* is generally seen in one of two ways: either as illegal bootlegged cassette or as an optically-reversed Japanese import laser disc that renders the film nearly unwatchable.

Though several proposed sequels had been announced, they abandoned *Conquered Fury*, *Conquered Wilderness 2*, *Wonder Energy*. Deodato made only one return trip to the jungle in the following decade: *Cat and Rat* (1984) is a sometimes amusing adventure/thriller that achieves eccentricism in favor of action, dope talk and teenage Greek rituals. Though many audiences felt *Cat and Rat* to be remarkably restrained for a Deodato film, the folks who cheered upon the alternative, Italian-language version, *Inferno* in *diveris* were given a grosser shot of the wifely violence in numerous scenes re-filmed for other foreign markets. *Cat and Rat* is not an edited or remixed version of *Inferno* in *diveris*, but rather an alternative print of the film that was tailored specifically for the U.S. and U.K. marketplace.

Inferno in *diveris* is actually the shorter of the two films, but nearly every scene of violence has been expanded upon. There is gore galore in the various graphic slashings, throat slittings, disfigurements, and evocations, but they're more appetizers for Deodato's stunning pace de resistance—Vladis (John Steiner's) atmospheric death by body trap. The man is captured in a



primitive spring-loaded trap that, when accidentally activated by a would-be woman, ups its quarry in half. No details are spared and the sequence ends with a close shot showing a vulture gnawing on the gate of the ruined corpse.

Though this sequence probably stands at the apex of Deodato's post-*Wildman* shockplopping, *The House on the Edge of the Park* (1984) showcases yet another side of Deodato's formidable arsenal of fright. Deodato turns his sights from one people to another and proves that lost in the wilderness the likes of David (Gary Busey on the Left) Hans and John (Conrad Furek) Morpheus can be just as horrifying as sharing a hot lunch with Amazonian headhunters. We see in the game can mean the hair on the back of your neck faster than David Hans can, with or without the straight razor he employs in *House on the Edge of the Park*. (He can also be seen doing the Hans thing in *Black Hills* (1977), co-starring with Francis Ford.)

Deodato maintains a pervasive atmosphere of seething tension and mounting suspense as Hans and Morpheus torment and humiliate a group of messy rich folk who've brought the poor home with them as the night's entertainment. Though Morpheus is little more than a sophist — his character being both overly and mindfully retarded — Hans is drop-dead scary.

For a film that begins with a brutal rape and strangulation over the opening credits, *House on the Edge of the Park* ends with a particularly lightweight credibility straining coda. As the film's climax, Hans is headily dispatched without much fan by the weary peasantfolk who've just spent the last hour covering up pants wetting fever. (Gasp's "level" ending that hits a potentially false note,





Except for the unsatisfying final movement, *Moore on the Edge of the Park* remains a vital "home invasion" entry, joining such films as William Wyler's excellent *The Desperate Hours* (1955), Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (1972), and John McNaughton's *Moody: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986) in the "Hell Comes to Your House" subcategory.

The mid-60's, however, seemed to mark an end to Deodato's *Nasty Period* and his subsequent work shows little of the exuberance and cynical levity that characterized earlier efforts. It's actually quite hard to envision Deodato becoming involved with a project like *Campy del crime* (1984) (aka *Body Count*), especially in light of the fact that this same slasher class came so many years after the day-of-the-suburban had already bid itself to death. Perhaps its only real distinction lies with seeing a bad-buch, grungy-at-the-samples David Hesse essay a role in which he's not a dancing

mannequin. Ivan Raimondi, Henry (Four Plus in Grey Velvet) Farnese, and Charles Napier (opening flames) Bakshi) stand out a cast that simply goes through the paces.

There's plenty of kink, motorcycles, smoking routines, shower scenes and bare breasts, though, along with yet another masked killer suffering from yet another traumatic childhood incident. On occasion, Claudio Simonetti's pulsing, rocking score and Deodato's shiny, probing camera offer brief hope in a film that's, really, still a good half dozen years behind the times.

It's hard to know what to think of Deodato's foray into the world of "sleazy" erotica, but *The Barbarians* (1984) is still lots more fun than John McNaughton's *Portrait*, chest-pounding leopards in *Clash the Barbarians*. The Barbarian Brothers, a twin set of manbeard Mr. Universe types, play the titular heroes and, contrary to expectations, deliver performances of unguessed warmth and

willness. With tongue firmly in cheek, Deodato and the Strips make this film far more enjoyable than it has any right to be.

With both *Phantom of Death* (1987) (it's debatable just how much) and *Dead Help*, Deodato makes a peripheral return to the genre, although each film can also be viewed as a suspense/thriller with splatter.

Phantom of Death again features a screenplay by frequent collaborator Giustafano Clerici, a name-brand cast, good production values, colorful Italian locations, and a decent score by Pino (the *Weekend Update* gag), but, sadly enough, it still doesn't amount to much. On the other hand, Deodato should be commensurately congratulated for providing continuing employment for the *Slasher* legion of Splatters—Giustafano Lombardo (who takes John Mephisto) Despite the shortcomings of the film itself, Deodato has chosen a superbly inspired role for the Man of a Thousand Wounds—

that of a priest who hears Michael York's tortured confessions. York is a superior classical poet/actor who is stricken with a devastating disease that seems rapid, premature aging as well as prolonged fits of homicidal rage.

The thickly padded inspired opening message features scenes of a piano rental crew out with some pretty funky props sword play that briefly lures one's hopes until the plot breaks into action and spools it all.

Donald Pleasence returns and plays virtually the same role he's walked through in the last several *Wuthersn* movies. He wrings his hands, Farrow has been, you show his teeth and wobbles into the streets whining about evil and just how easily that whole psycho killer business has really become.

Deodato frequently manages to overcome the inert plot and spittle opening hypnosis of Pleasence by staging several *Slasher*, *Argento*-like



murder sequences that really click. When York's suspect is killed by a spear, suspect's fountain of arterial spray erupts as she tumbles overboard through a glittering shower of splintering glass in a more reminiscent of Agostinelli in *Baywatch*: *Deep Red Trenches and Phosphorus*. The film works best when Deodato allows his camera a free, unfettered reign. The computer tracking shots, arsey angles, and fluid crane manoeuvres show that Deodato can, indeed, mount a very exciting visual package, despite the paucity of material.

Deep Red could have worked, but it would probably have had to have been a comedy. Anyone you're dealing with a possessed telephone line that kills trapped fish, strangles one woman while making another wear kooky, black lingerie and spike heel boots in the bath then you've got to be mighty judicious with your material — and Deodato isn't. He played as a full tilt thriller, complete with a gag reflexes theme song (*Don't Answer the Phone!*), a malevolent pay phone that splatters customers with doggerel verse and smoky, surreal scenes filled with mysterious pagans and lethal ending fans.

There's even a professor who delivers a straight-faced lecture on "unidentified here I hate emerges" that circulates throughout the universe and seduce the men who release them. A perfect example of which one might guess, is the sequence in which a beautiful model is shown working on the floor in her underwear, tightly bound and then

sexually abused by a naughty phone that blew down her hair and offers up an uninterrupted stream of titillating chatter. It's a scene without parallel in the Deodato canon, to be sure.

So what can you say about a director who goes from garroting and shooting his crewmates on screen to seducing leggy operators with possessed telephones? Jungle women and debauching head injuries aside, Deodato appears to be healthy and exuberantly reveling in his career. Perhaps in maturity, Deodato no longer craves the intensity he generated with his cannibal eyes and is content with further exploration of his craft without regard to genre. But those who remember the feverish intensity, uncompromising subject matter, and sense of kinetic risk become exhilarated in his earlier works are now, no doubt, perplexed by this kinder, gentler Suggs Deodato.

The progression declines in the later films of such other former *Exorcists* and silent terrorists as *Tape Wrecker*, *Wax Crows*. John Carpenter and Sam Cunningham is a better lesson in which most genre fanatics have become accustomed.

If Deodato's next picture turns out to be the USA cable premiere of *Three Men and a Crustacean*, then it's probably time to switch the channel. Or good.

GO FOR THE

Stephen R. Bissette

GROSS-OUT

*"So: terror on the top, horror below it, and lowest of all, the gag reflex of revulsion . . . I recognize terror as the finest emotion (used to almost quintessential effect in Robert Wise's film *The Haunting*, where, as in "The Monkey's Paw", we are never allowed to see what is behind the door), and so I will try to terrorize the reader. But if I find I cannot terrify him/her, I will try to horrify; and if I find I cannot horrify, I'll go for the gross-out. I'm not proud."*

—Stephen King,
Dance Macabre, 1981

Though I wouldn't have argued the point a decade ago, it seems to me that, given the state of the horror film in the '80s, one could almost the evolution of the genre as its 'gross-out' quotient. While doing so necessarily excludes the refined presence of the acknowledged horror film classics, from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* to *The Exorcist* and *The Shining*, it does allow us to trace the roots of the modern horror film and its fleshy successors for the crowd: *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *An American Werewolf in London*, and their myriad many kin.

Though by no means definitive, this article will indeed try to trace the evolution of the gross-

out. Of all the arts, the cinema (by its very nature) seems the best suited to explore and exploit the mass audience's visceral involvement with violence. The cinema's plasticity of scenes, times, and places of space and reality coupled with the narrative potential of the medium, allows for a more emotionally immediate and involving exploration/exploration of violence than afforded by all the other arts: theater, music, sculpture, drawing and painting, cinema, etc. In fact films depend upon a fusion and synthesis of all these art forms to create its illusion. For example, consider what goes into just one horrific moment of the cinema: a random example *Fred Dead 2*. The makeup and lighting of the scene for filming are theatrical conceits, the makeup effects highly detailed and fully executed sculptures, the direction of the sequence is usually storyboarded (if in earnest, the final motion picture released by the trained crew, etc. The combination of these elements can, when well executed lead especially when the context of a well-told horror story's, elicit a physical 'got reacted' from its audience.

In this manner, the modern horror film speaks to its audience on a more primal, physical level than the older films usually did. They cannot help, if you will, on a 'body' level, and while many critics and film scholars argue this level of communication is indicative of a reprehensible regression in the genre, I feel it is in fact the evolution of a different cinematic language. No better, no worse, simply different, and to such a language that must be studied and understood.

The horror film may have become quite fluent in the language of the 'gross out', but it is by no means the only genre to use it. Many key films in the history of the medium are (and have contributed to) the 'gross out' vocabulary: the Babylonian warrior chased in two with a single stroke in *Indestructible Man*; the horrifying Odessa Steps sequence in *Potemkin* (1925); the Union soldier disfigured in the face in *China with the Wind* (1920); the torture of the underground resistance leader in *Open City* (1945); the ground-

breaking damages to *Sodom and G-dyle* (1907) and *The Wolf Ranch* (1911) etc. Graphic violence is often central to the great films, westerns, boxing movies, sword 'n' sorcery gallopades, war films, from *Le Cœur de Lion* / *Woodsen Crusade* (78), in which a man is blown to shreds before our eyes by a desert ball to *Atankah* (124), wherein Jack Potatoes loses his arm under the tread of an enemy tank, and sluggers back to command post with bloody letters dangling from the stumps) were often more harrowing than their horror contemporaries. *Sodom's* bloodbaths were collected (quadrupled?) by Akira Kurosawa's opening to *Tenjiku* (402) and its sequel *Sanshiro* (680), with its show-down's surrounding corner of blood at its conclusion, by the time of the *Sodom* *Odyssey* / *Love Wolf* series, (710-721), the invention gone bad reached hallucinatory extremes. For American mainstream audiences, the mayhem came to a head in the winter of 1911: the major studio Christmas release included *Dirty Harry*, *Sinner Days*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Devil*, *Polevich's Macbeth*, bloodbaths all, paving the way for the rampant and phenomenal success of *Jane* and *The Eternal* late in the '90s.

It is, of course, absurd to divorce these sequences from the context of the films, and in acknowledging the 'gruesome' era is unconsciously reduced to simply being isolated bits of mayhem. Nevertheless, these vital threads are worth following, and for the purposes of this article, we must focus on the horror film, we must also end at the birth of the 'new horror film' with *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), at which point the floodgates were burst open. A flood... of blood. See Appendix!

SEE APPENDIX: BLOODBATHS (1890-1930)

For all intents and purposes, it started in 1890 with Thomas Edison (the inventor of the light bulb, watch) and one of his Kinetoscopes, *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*: in less than a minute, turn-of-the-century G-d-fans could see what the live theatre never showed them. Mary approaches the chopping block. She kneels, the execution swings his ax--and the audience is rewarded with the shifting spectacle of Mary's head rolling in the dust! But the gruesome bit of action continues to the screen without interruption "... Arthur Knight. *The Latest Art*. (1897)

French film pioneer Louis Lumière utilized a similarly simple substitution effect for *Execution by guillotine* / *The Mechanical Doctor* (1893), as a whole pig is fed into one end of a machine and processed meat products (sausages, ham, etc.) grind out the other. (International editions followed: British George Smith's *Shaving Sausages* (1897), the American *The Savage*

Machine (1897), Edison's *Pun in a Peach Shop* (1901), with the process reversed as Edward G. Foster's *Big Factory* (1904), wherein sausages and hotdogs are processed into live pig dogs! So ended the screen's first gore cycle, with silly effects that were later revived for Tod V. Mikell's satirical *The Cigar Crusaders* (711). French magazine Georges Méliès would pioneer film fantasy with a more sophisticated bag of cinematic tricks, and though his intent and effect was almost always comedic in nature, his films featured many gruesome moments. *The Man with the Rubber Head* (1902) inflicts a lively severed head until it explodes, *The Aristocrat* (1903) rips off heads (including his own) to string them like action screen telegraph wires, performing "God Save the King", *The Terrible Turkish Assassinator* (1904) lops off three criminals' heads with a single sweep of his scimitar, only to have the heads regain their bodies and back the scimitar into three frantic seconds!

More gruesome effects figure in *Melior Les Roynes Assassins* / *A Nocturne of X Days* (1897), wherein an X-rayed patient's skeleton steps out of his body and his now-living flesh sloughs off into the dust, or *The Cook as Trouble* (1904), who plunges into a stewpot and emerges into broth, leaving only his wet clothing. A heinous eye buster up a little boy and delivers him to *Le Cœur de L'Épave* / *In the Deep Man's Cove* (1905), a shock repeated in Melior's last masterpiece, *Conquest of the North Pole* (1912), as the Sledge Chariot (an impressively gigantic marionette) emerges from the ice flows to swallow one of the explorers whole (only to later vomit back up, alive and well). Based on historical reality rather than fantasy, Melior's *Wandering Through the Ages* (1908) catalogs war, crime, and death through the ages.

Italian spectacles of the period were similarly grim. *White Labyrinth* (1908) provided an often grisly (on medium and long shot) tour of Hell itself, another Italian shock of this period (1916), title unknown. I saw it in a 1978 television documentary, *The Amazing Years of Cinema: The Maelstrom*, hosted by Douglas Fairbanks Jr.) went to shocking extremes to dramatize the tortures of the Inquisition: Scarlet, hand-colored tinting effects enhance the flames which burn the victims alive, as well as the spitting blood on a victim who is locked to a spinning wheel and rolled into a bed of spikes! This gory show anticipates the more 'horror' subgenre, from *Witchcraft Through the Ages* (1910) and *The Devils* (77) to the cycle of *Mark of the Devil* (68), *Queen of the Moors* (79) and *The Ace* series (74-77).

Edison's 1910 *Frankenstein* showed the monster born (or rather 'hatched') via alchemy, with gobs of wet flesh swimming into the dishpan using

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the same techniques (practised in reverse) later and for the same purposes as *Horror of Dracula* and *The Bad Seed*. Maurice Tourneur's *Le Syndrome du Docteur Goddard et du Professeur Plume* / *The Lunatics* (1931) lifted its Poe adaptation from the French theatre of Grand Guignol, whereas the explicit violence 'saved' anatomy by cutting out an eye and slitting the throat. He falls into a chamber, and emerges with bloodied hands, while the blood that seeps out from under the door evokes the screams. Abel Gance's *L'Accusé* (1930) took to a shocking finale in which dead soldiers march on the living, "let a single one without a crushed face or body that daunted death" (George De Caillavet, *Spectator in the Museum*, many played by soldiers who would return to the World War I trenches and die after the filming).

The infamous *Murder / Wayhough Through the Ages* (1930) remains an extraordinary film when seen today. Director Benjamin Christensen's history of criminality and the punishment is a risk-blot of shocking transgressions, black comedy, suspense, and documentary, and many of its tableaux (the black mass, baby smothering, the inquisitor tortured) are vividly realised and still unnerving, beginning with Bertheaume's demons, nudity, and blood (in *Chien Andalou* (1929), a collaboration by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, begins with a shot of a man holding a razor to one hand, and holding open a woman's eye with the other. A cloud blocks the moon, and he slashes his eye open in an explicit climax. It remains one of the cinema's most shocking images, and the film itself is an anti-guardia classic and a seminal horror film in that it is the first film to dare assault the audience: its gut-wrenching opening, the refusal to attach its language of dramatis and nightmare to covered head, rotting dokey carcasses, anti streaming from a hole in the palm of a hand) to any coherent narrative – on every level, the film attacks the viewer's perception and preconceptions.

Anton Artaud, the creator of the Theatre of Cruelty, tried to go beyond one better, and wrote a screenplay entitled *The Revolt of the Butcher* (1930), wherein "violence, savagery, blood lust, a thirst for violence, an obsession with horror, collapse of moral values, moral hypocrisy, lies, perjury, sadism, depravity, etc. have been made as explicit as possible" (Artaud's introduction to *The Revolt of the Butcher*, 1930). The screenplay was never filmed.

Less brutal in its intent, but no less provocative to its contemporary audiences, was Jean Cocteau's grand film *Le Sang d'un Poète* / *The Blood of a Poet* (1930), a hypnotically dreamlike anti-guardia film. Though Cocteau's approach is commonly grade compared to the surreal staged

by Buñuel and Dalí, the poet's passage through the Hotel Des Folies Desmouettes is punctuated by a bloody suicide (his own, from which he resurges), a boy killed by an orchid, choking on his own blood, and the poet's final (Gaudin's) suicide. Cocteau would mirror the poet's death even more graphically in his later *Le Testament d'Orphée* / *The Testament of Orpheus* (1939), in which a poet (played by Cocteau himself) is transfixed by a spear

BLIND AND THUNDER (1930-1939)

The mainstream horror (and crime) film of the early sound era often delivered the goods, especially in America, where Depression audiences were in need of whatever cheap thrills they could find, and Hollywood was eager to deliver them. The reluctance of the Motion Picture Production code allowed the horrors of the early '30s to sharpen their edge. Even low-budget fare like *The White Zombie* (1932) had its highlights: the undead experiment worker falling into the cane-pounding water, the bullet holes in the chest of an attacking zombie. Depression audiences saw *King Kong* (1933) gnawily clear and crush his human victims (in footage that remained unseen for a generation, and despite of a Tyrannosaurus Rex by gnawing his jaw and neck. But they didn't see the fate of the sailors thrown into the ocean by Kong – the animated sequences of giant apes and beasts doing as the screaming victims was considered too gruesome by the studio, and was trimmed before its release. The classic 1933 Production code lost the sequence of Karloff's monster throwing the little girl into the drink, and the shot of him impaling his former foe (Dwight Frye) on a hook. The monster's scene also reportedly skipped the demon of Ted Browning's *Frankie* (1931), as the cinema freaks manipulate indicated by the character's screams going unheard the villainous Howells the Strong Man in the work of mad and man.

Similar in tone, and just as grim, was the excellent *Wind of Lost Souls* (1931), with its own climax of vaginal primitive surgery inflicted upon the howling Dr. Mirera (Charles Laughton) by the mannequin he had carved out of living flesh and medical technology in 'The House of Pain'. The bare and cadaverous are given a brief glimpse of the good doctor at work midway through the film, and it is a notably chilling sight. And there was more.

Sale Lugosi's bleeding of the prostitute (Arlene Francis) on a rack in *Murder of the Rue Morgue* (1932), and the discovery of the old woman's body crumpled up the chimney in the same film. The magnanimous Count Zaroff's trophy room of mangled and pickled human heads in *The Most Dangerous Game* (1933), Boris Karloff, back

from the dead and carving symbols into his own chest as an offering to Anubis in *The Ghoul* (1931), the peasant army's death by molten metal, crushing, and (in a particularly cruel split second) crushed between a falling ladder and the Notre Dame Cathedral's walls in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939) defends his beloved church and Notre-Dame against them. Perhaps the most graphic of the early sound horrors to emerge from the major studios was Paramount's *Murders in the Zoo* (1933). Instead the obligatory mystery pitting and unifying cowardly relief, William L. Powell dispatched his victims with sadistic glee. From its gruesomely horrible opening, as Powell leaves his wife's lover to die in the jungle of India, after having seen his two sons, in the young finale, with Powell (as doctor) crushed to death in the coils of a murderous serpent, *Murders in the Zoo* is a heightened masterpiece that still packs a wallop.

There are also moments that border on more graphic future horrors. The disturbing shots of melting human figures in *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1934) and the disconcertingly final decay of *The Mummy* (1932) point to the graphic mechanisms to come, while *Dr. X* (1912) preceded its cannibalistic 'Full Moon Murders' in an electrolytic fusion of flesh and (as the prototype killer chants its name) 'synthetic flesh' that is scarcely echoed fifty years later in Cronenberg's cry of "Long Live the New Flesh" in *Videodrome* (1983).

While there was no shortage of classic gore in the mainstream horror, the real meat and potatoes typically lurked in the occasional imports, underground films, and especially the exploitation films, whose raw Code-approved fare was more often than not their greatest source of money. Usually relegated to midnight exhibitions (proper theatres wouldn't show such films, you know) were films like *Savage Girl* (1931) and *House* (1934). *Savage Girl* is a canonical 'Guns Guns' gang's gun film, filmed in Texas by Commander George M. Dyer, a famed Royal Geographic explorer of the era.

Dean Saper's notorious primitive *Maniac* (1941) sports a sticky plot and photography, hellish soundsting, and the pastiche with a sequence in which the mad doctor finds a black cat chewing down on a heart he's about to transplant. Finally, he gouges the cat's eye out and declares it "just unlike an eye" — in a grasp! But the gleam is gone!" he declares).

From Europe came Abel Gance's remake of *L'Aigle* (191), released in the US as imported film as *That Bird May Come* (1911), which William K. Everson calls "with one of the most horrible films ever made." Again a passionate offhanded statement, in which a desperate scientist raises the dead

Doll on past word to frighten the living into ending all wars: the film also stands as a curious precedent to George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (just as the latter's *Day of the Walking Dead* were memorable. "Gance secured the cooperation of a league of French War veterans, all of them maimed and disfigured, sometimes into grotesque faces that he added the work of the studio makeup department, and he used the most tragic — and repellent — of these faces as the men to demand audience attention as they march at the head of dead legions." (Everson, *More Chances of the Horror Film*, 1968).

The 1940's were tame by comparison, the Code rule was strictly enforced by the censors during the war years, and it is doubtful the most drastic of horror films could compete with the atrocities that emerged in the wake of the war, the concentration camps, and Hiroshima. Unable and unwilling to dwell on more visceral effects, the horror films went for lots of thunder and minimal blood. Even the transformation films typified by *The Wolfman* (1941), *The Cat People* (1942), and Universal's *Panther the Ape Human* trilogy (43-45) chose not to exploit the physical agonies of their werewolves/shapes as they change — in *The Cat People*, the shape shifting remains deliberately (and, in this case, effectively) out of sight.

Surprisingly Val Lewton provided two of the decade's greatest horrors — surprising because Lewton's name is synonymous with the masterful use of understatement to make horror. Admittedly both sequels to simply potentiated rubber ghouls: the finest sequel to *The Leopard Man* (43) as a young girl screams and pounding at her door mother's door are suddenly cut off, and the dark blood seeps under the door, and the freezing but gory cleanup during the climax of the month *The Short Day* (also '43), as a blade is twisted into the mad captain's belly.

In *The Beast with Five Fingers* (45), an ambulatory severed head that another would like a spider, plays the piano, and is not to strange love. The disembodied hand (with its clean cut stump in plain view) is gruesomely nightmarish, and the show it suffers (impaled, rotting, burned in the fireplace, etc.) easily makes it the 40's ultimate Hollywood grotesque.

More direct and brutally felt was Georges Franju's documentary from France, *Le Sang des Hommes* / *The Blood of the Men* (48). In harrowing contrast to Lewton's remake *The Mechanical Doctor* (1955), Franju takes us into the Parisian slaughterhouse and presents an effectively vivid portrait of live animals being professionally reduced to meat.

THEY COULDN'T ESCAPE THE TERROR!

THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE THEIR EYES!

AND NEITHER WILL YOU!

"The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms"



The King of Prehistoric Sea-Giants
raging up from ages past
to tear a city apart!

THE ORIGINAL FRANK CROWE - LEO KILLER
DINOPIA THE JACK PARRIS
WITH THE MUSIC BY THE JACK PARRIS
Produced by Jack Parris, A.A. - The King of Prehistoric Sea-Giants
The King of Prehistoric Sea-Giants - The King of Prehistoric Sea-Giants
Produced by Jack Parris, A.A. - The King of Prehistoric Sea-Giants

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With the coming of the 1960's films—particularly horror and science fiction films—began to depict more graphic mayhem as a matter of course. That the decade began with movies willing to expose and finger over society's underbelly (such as Bunuel's *Los Olvidados* / *The Young and the Damned* (1950) and Jean YVES Escoffier's *Les Petits Joueurs*, *Little Players* (1952), vividly depicting the ravages of poverty and child abuse) had less to do with it than the birth and growth of the Drive-in Theatre in America and the overwhelming success of television as the American home. Simply put, filmmakers had to lure the audience out of the home by promising and delivering greater excitement by showing on the bigger screens what could not be shown on the TV. Younger teenage audiences flocked to and nurtured the drive-ins, whose screens were further challenged to show less that was more vital, daring, sensational (and cheaper) and as we've heard from Stephen King at the beginning of this article, the 'gross-out' is the cheap shot of all: show the proper vulgar scenes theatres would show. I.D. CinemaScope, Panavision, etc. were one way to lure audiences into the theatres: sexual situations, nudity, and more graphic horrors were another.

While the American Gothic horror ushered in the 50's in the manner of the preceding decade, with *The Strange Door* (51), wherein torture-loving Charles Laughton is crushed to death in a water wheel, jamming the device that would squash the hero and heroine) and its like, the science fiction film stepped from the sterility of *Destination Moon* (50) to the pole-punctuating confrontation with *The Thing* (From Another World) (51). After the nerve-wracking buildup to the appearance of 'The Thing' at the doorway (its hand is splintered by the slamming of the door), the thrashing blood fed spores of the creature, and the climactic electrocution — not to mention the bar-office scenes it earned—there was no looking back, only up ("Keep Watching the Skies!") as more shockingly extraterrestrials rained down. *Invaders From Mars* (52) never drilled mind control devices into the back of their hosts' tender necks, it *Compared the World* (53) or tried to, anyway—using flying murderous parasites, while *Teenagers from Outer Space* (56) signalled their violence down to bare skeletons.

Most raucous, and gruesome, of the extraterrestrial invaders was the unknown entity possessing the hapless astronaut who returned from space during *The Quatermass Experiment* / *The Creeping Unknown* (53), Hammer Films' successful

adaptation of Nigel Kneale's BBC television play *The gradual, grueling transformation of the astronaut* (Richard Widmark), taking refuge from by absorbing his victims and partially taking on their form (i.e., he absorbs a woman's plasma, and his arm and shoulder become vaginal and thereby), even as the extraterrestrial presence absorbs his another form, touched a new, deep nerve in audiences. The empathic suspense created by depicting a pitiful man who is losing his humanity, eaten away and changed from within as if by a disease, unsettles the viewer as a shockingly uncomfortable, intense level of biological evolution. The sequel, *Quatermass II* / *Escape from Space* (57) pursued other viewers. Though it's notable here for the grisly moment in which the alien-controlled workers block the high-pressure ventilation pipes with their own bodies, gulping themselves and filling the pipes with blood, but other films tried to touch the same nerve. *Night of the Blood Beast* (58) featured an astronaut infested with the thrashing embryos of an alien lifeform growing inside of his body (like first monster birth imagery), the *First Men Into Space* (59) returns connected with space (but not floating for human blood, while, most famous but less it physically visceral of them all, Don Siegel's classic *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (58) had clam-popping vegetal pods from space supplanting sleeping humans with cold, emotionless copies of the original person. Other terrestrial horrors also touched the same level of biological disease that *Quatermass Experiment* explored: the wriggling, worm-rucking "thought-creatures" of *Parasite Within a Man* (58), the early stages of transformation in *The Monster* (58) as the reporter sports a blinking eye on his shoulder that soon grows into a monstrous head, the centipede parasite that lives on our bodies and is awakened into murderous activity by fear in William Castle's *The Tigger* (58), the mutated cancer cells that devour bone and leave the victim's shapless flesh behind in Terence Fisher's *Island of Fear* (58). All of them anticipate the primal fear evolution and monstrous birth imagery that would later be explored by David Lynch (*Blue-headed* (78)) and David Cronenberg (*They Came from Within* (74), *Scalped* (77), *The Shout* (78) etc.) and embodied by the likes of *Alien* (79) and *The Mountain* (78), among others.

Less subtle monster flicks of the 50s often punctuated and spread their thrills with doses of gore. Monster feeding habits provided many such moments: Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion *Shoelace* putting up a valiant (or stupid) New York policeman by the head and gulping him down in *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (52), *James Whitmore* pumped full of ferret and in the jaws of an octopus and in *Them!* (54) a giant leg gaily



ST. HEDSON PATRICK DAVIS
 MONTY PRICE ROBERT HANFORDL BERTHOLD JACOBSON

marking on a man's face (in *disguise*) in *The Strange World of Planet X* / *Cosmo Monster* (87), the withered back of a blind-drawn victim in *Earth vs. the Spider* (88), *The Trollenberg Terror* / *The Choking Box* (94) leaving behind headless victims after dismembers, as do the protagonists of *Attack of the Crab Monsters* (90) and *The Monster of Padmos* (90) – the gators in the pit feeding on the remains of What Bessie's victims (and, finally, himself) and *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (91), the inchworm bloodsucking sequences of *Attack of the Giant Leeches* and *The Secret of Mountain Cove* (91), *The Shark* (90) and its too biting team work victims off in their huge claws and stamping them to death before eating them, the smother *The Blob* (86) and *Goliath*, the Demoralized Monster (93) consuming their victims whole (the latter film especially easy for its shot of the flesh peeling off the partially devoured hand of a beast, another blob, *The B Man* 1966, provided the most graphic science fiction human maimings of the decade, compliments of Goliath creator! *Pleasant Big Toes* (90).

Injury to the eye was common, properly looked off by the archetypal blinding of the Cyclops Polyphemus in *Olympus* (83), which naturally inspired the blinding of the Cyclops in *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (81), and the more graphic eyeball puncturing of *It Conquered the World* (86), *The Cyclops* (87), *Invaders of the Deep* (90), *The Blob* and the *Female* / *Monster* (88), *Horror of the Black Museum* 196, with the infamous spiked horizontal of its opening sequence), *Amateur Night* (90), *Angry Red Power* (92), and others, including Italian pebbles like *The Son of Hercules in Medina* (82), *The Monster* (83), etc. The giant characters that tries to devour James Mason during the climax of *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (78) is rewarded with a spine passed through the tongue, and the ambulatory brains and spinal columns of *Freak Without a Face* (80) are shot, paried, and used as the dramatic value of black-and-white gore that remains one of the 80's greatest highlights. When *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (78) and attacked San Francisco, Ray Harryhausen's animated giant octopus dropped its tentacles onto sidewalk pedestrians and scooped them on the tarmac, a truly innovative of stop-motion animation and live action mixed in the Harryhausen *Ten of 20 Million Miles to Earth* (87) holding an elephant and pushing it into its hapless trainee; in the Harryhausen *Dragon of The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* creating the real magician in (in *Snail* (80), *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (59) goes on attacking spider with a pin, and thick, dark oil runs down the pin over his arm. *The Amazing Colossal Man*

(57) is stabbed in the neck with a syringe syringe, only to pull it out and throw it, like a dart, through one of the gory humans attacking him. A giant spider is impaled by a stiletto in *Journey to the 7th Planet* (81) to the accompaniment of their gasping sounds and a torrent of multicolored gore. *The Madman from Planet* (81) crashes a rat in his only talent in fall, dropping some of the camera, the *Monster from Green Hell* (86), a giant wasp, spouts steam white venom into a snake. *The Sea Creature* (84) dispatches her victims with hooklike talons and we see the remains of one of her attacks, with bloodspattered walls and bodies. *The Killer Shrews* (89) are also many creatures, delivering poisonous bite and blood and chewing up their victims horribly. *The Attack of the Crab Monsters* (86) is surprisingly gay for its time, with covered hands and decapitated heads in the process of the ridiculous creatures, the head-biting *Monster of Padmos* (90) spits an incredible jet of phlegm into the human chest, just as *Apocalypse* (92) spouts acidic green saliva over Denmark (to its visible damage, another throwaway bloody effect in one of the worst giant monster films ever made). Jacques Tourneur's *The Curse of the Demon* (57) ends with the new-viable demon viciously claving Neal McDermott to death in a graveyard, an explicit moment in an otherwise masterfully understated climax of supernatural horror. The most haunting of all the 80's monster movies was, arguably, *The Fly* (84), an absurd science-fiction concerning teleportation and mixed up stars that create a man with a fly's head and hand; the color film opens with the discovery of his body, the head and hand washed to bloody pulp under a metal press, and the later sequence when we see the creature keep his with to connect the art liberally killing him and destroying the evidence of his monstrous state is powerful.

Made as the 80's monster movies may have occasionally been, they paid tribute to the horror films that were their contemporaries. The first wave was enormous enough: the features of *The March of the Vampires* (81), the *Hor* (the third) graphic (including in *The Undead* (84), the media heart-removal in *The Steamboat* (87), and especially the brain surgery in *The Black Sheep* (90) as the scalpel cuts into the exposed brain and transparent *Orb* comes from the side. The moment of almost gore heralded the visceral horrors to come the following year (and as the exploding bullet-wounds that slash through the members in *The Creature with the Atom Brain* (86) fireworks the spouting color bullet wounds in Hammer's *Curse of the Werewolf* (81) and the slow motion gradual gore of *Donner & Clyde* (87) and *The Wolf* (80) effects which are so regular today). The film that



SEE strange new life form
in cage of horrors!

SEE monster being held
in cage of horrors!

SEE monster being held in
cage of horrors!

**SPACE
CREATURE
RUNS
AMOK
ON
EARTH!**



20. MILLION MILES TO EARTH

WILLIAM HOPPER • JOAN TAYLOR

Produced by RKO Pictures and William H. Miller
and by RKO Pictures. The story is by RKO Pictures.
Screenplay by RKO Pictures. Directed by RKO Pictures.
Music by RKO Pictures. A RKO Picture.

lashed down the doors was Hammer's *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957), a vibrant, vibrant full-color reinterpretation of the Mary Shelley classic that resulted at the ending and the repeated cannibalism of the Victorian setting to show, with almost baroque detail, the corpse, fluids, and surgery that went into the creation of the Monster.

Classical blood and gore characterized *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1966), laced with some welcome deliberate humor. What Brando to his monster "Speak up! You've got a good tongue. I know, I tested it on myself!", *Frankenstein 1970* (1968, with graphic heart transplants and a perf of eyeballs shattering on the floor), *Blood of the Vampire* (58, despite the title a musical horror film), *Corridors of Blood* (68), *Dr. Blood's Coffin* (68), etc. A Frankenstein variation on H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* shot in the Philippines, *Terror as a Man* (1960), lent its pitiful surgically created cat man a precious depth of feeling and dignity that balances the film's gamut of an institutional working system before the film's few gay scenes; the film was re-released in the 40's as *Blood Creature*, making it forerunner of the *Island of Dr. Moreau* (1968), and *Island of Blood* (1968), readily making sex, gore, and the lady "Deliriously Mad" Edward G. Robinson's *The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake* (1959) carried the surgical motif into the realm of warlike, with a *Dr. Moreau* coming to some nasty sequences of (suffering) beheading and (innocent) lip-stitching, skinning, and hand-shrinking.

Hammer's other major international success, *Terence Fisher's Horror of Dracula* (58), again brought maximum filmmaking skills, production values, and performance into a full-color, physically moving reinterpretation of Bram Stoker's famous novel. As with *Curse of Frankenstein*, the drama (over-sensational or not) is enhanced rather than overwhelmed by the Grand Guignol highlights: the graphic making of the vampire's, the blooded fangs and clanking blood-drinking, and especially the remarkable climactic destruction of Dracula (Christopher Lee) in sunlight. *The Return of Dracula* (58), a fine, atmospheric American variation, had instead also shown the bloody making of a female vampire (in black and white), and *Dracula* (Francis Lederer) being impaled upon a splintered stone support and dissolving into a skeleton.

Hammer's success with their own versions of Frankenstein and Dracula had them quickly receiving remakes of other horror classics, again with the trademark Grand Guignol. *The Mummy* (58), with a gory tongue removal and graphic poisoning, poisoning, and gunshot wounding of the

Mummy, *The Phantom of the Opera* (58, with a grotesque eye gouging), *The Bride of Dracula* (58, with Cushing's Van Helsing castrating the vampire's bats with a red hot iron, an effort repeated in *Kiss of the Vampire*), *The Curse of the Werewolf* (58), with the already noted bloody gunshot effect and an athletic woman's clattering blood, *Kiss of the Vampire* (58), dramatic attack of bats which show the vampire even to drink, *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* (58), energetic hand chopping and spouting stumps, *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (68), a shocking forest slashing to revive Dracula, and more.

Hammer studios hoped to emulate their success, though it wasn't until Roger Corman and AIP began their series of lower budget Allan Poe adaptations that Hammer's crown as the 'Kings of Horror' was threatened. Robert S. Baker and Monty Bernau, two British producers were first on the landscape with four films that were filmed with more explicit gore and nudity for export versions to prove that was often mistakenly attributed to Hammer in the pages of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine: First was a *Quatermass* imitation, *The Twisted Thing* / *The Crawling Eye* (58), followed by Hammer's *Gothic* / *Grand Guignol* variations, *The Blood of the Vampire* (58, scripted by Hammer writer Jimmy Sangster), *Jack The Ripper* (58, switching from black and white to color for its final scene as the Ripper is stalked by an elevator, and gloriously explicit fluids of gore ooze up from the floor), and best of all, *The Flesh and the Devils* / *Mane* (58).

Even greater and more memorable were the Anglo-Americanated trio of horror films which gloriously were their own on their own, *Horror of the Black Museum* (58), *Curse of Horror* (58), and Michael Powell's classic *Peeping Tom* (59).

Of the three, *Horror of the Black Museum* is the crudest revolting in vulgar, lip-smacking mayhem committed by hammy Michael Gough and his young assistant: the infamous pink breasts that impale a woman's eyes, an old woman's neck parred by monstrous sex toys, a subway prostitute guillotined in her own bed, etc. *Curse of Horror* was a better made film though to lose sensationally while its plot (Guignol plastic corpse manages a series of crimes whose final he has shared) allowed for another procession of brutal deaths, the vampire (Anton Diffring) is so obscured — and aroused — by disfigured women that the film flirts with sexual sadism to considerable effect, carrying an erotic charge its low producer never even approached. The most intelligent and disturbing of the trilogy, *Peeping Tom*, is also the least violent, however, its unimpassioned portrait of a young photographer

Carl Boorman driven to murder women and photograph their death scenes as outraged the British press that the film ended the distinguished career of its director, Michael Powell.

While the grand, violent imagery of Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* (78, wherein a father brutally kills the men who raped and killed his daughter; the 'wounded' for Last Moon on the Left, (70)) and Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (57, a meditation of Macbeth that ends with Yashu Mitoku trussed and beheading with truncheons around must be acknowledged, a French film by the director of *Le Sang des Bêtes* / *The Blood of the Beasts* (48) brought the decade to a close with the most graphic, disturbing footage of the SF+ Georges Franju's *Les Yeux Sans Visage* / *Eyes Without a Face* (58, released in the U.S. under the exploitation title *The Horrors Chamber of Dr. Faustus* on a double bill with *The Monster*) tells its most macabre tale with a fusion of poetic elegance and glacial cruelty that is spellbinding. Eyes Without a Face spawned a number of near-imitations: *Corruption* (63), *Blood Rose* (75), *Monsters of the Damned* (78, grafting eyes instead of skin), *Frankenstein* (88), etc., but none of them held a candle to Franju's achievement, save to remind the gore quotient to negligible effect. Jean-Pierre Jeunet's variation, *Grain en la Roche* / *The Awful Dr. Orloff* (82), shifted the surgical horror into the realm of salacious with its blend of surgery, sex, sadism and bondage. Franju's own sequel came ten years in comparison, though the best of her later work (*The Disobedient Dr. Z* (86), *Yours in Face* (88), *Les Amoureux* / *Enchanted* / *The Loves of Irma*, (78, etc.) displays a progressive obsession with sex and horror. The surgical horrors continued: *The Blood That Wouldn't Die* (1963), *The Virgin of Nuremberg* / *Horror Castle* (64), mixing color Ektachrome gobs with a defigured madman whose features were flayed off by Nazi surgeons (on a graphic monochromatic flashback), and including a horrific torture scene in which a rat in a cage is strapped over a woman's face, *The Murder Clinic* / *Avengers of the Living Dead* (66), John Frankenheimer's brilliant *Scum* (68), with a brief but painfully vivid detailing of the facial plastic surgery that changes middle-aged John Randolph into Rock Hudson.

The key transitional SF+ SF+ SF+ films were *The Seven Year Witches* / *Die (66/67)* and *The Flesh Eaters* (62/64), both of which were made before Herschell Gordon Lewis unleashed *Blood Feast* (63) on an unprepared nation, and both of which are in black and white, denying their status as rumored 'gore' films. *The Blood That Wouldn't Die* is patently absurd and talked away SF+ as a doctor keeps his hero's severed head alive in his lab.

On drugs reported to drilling effect in *The Freaks* (64), (65) I only know her telepathically: and the hedonist monster in *Exploitation* (the result of the doctor's previous grafting experiments) to murder. The creature rips off the lab monster's deformed arm in an excessively gory sequence, which is topped when the monster bursts out of his chest and attacks the doctor, taking a chunk of flesh out of his throat and holding it up to the camera to gloat over it before throwing it aside (at which point we are further treated to a shot of the quivering patient shuddering on the floor, all of this footage is, alas, trimmed from the commercially available videocassette). *The Horror of Party Beach* (62, directed by Del Tenney in tandem with a mystery-gore thriller *The Curse of the Living Corpse*, which became its co-feature) turned its silly teen waste spawned its monsters against beach babes and young party girls with surprisingly bloody results (again, all of which is trimmed from the commercially available videocassette), but it was outdone by *The Flesh Eaters* (which, again, has no most graphic footage in its commercially available videocassette). *The Flesh Eaters* is the 'missing link' between the SF+ creature features like *The Blob* and the SF+ splatter films (like *Blood Feast*): a group of scientists and their pilot are marooned on an isolated island surrounded by turquoise-flesh-eater infested waters, which are in fact the creation of the mysterious German Scientist (Martin Kosleck) who lives on the island, as an extension of his World War II Nazi bio warfare experiments. Until the climax (celebrity makes the key experiment to combine into a single cyclops creature), which the hero kills in proper SF+ monster movie fashion), the movie's highlights are more and more graphic scenes of the 'biochemists' at work: ocean spray obscures the captain of an approaching rescue ship, a head is slipped a flesh-eater strike by the doctor, and when from within, reaching his spilling intestines in his hands, and finally, the doctor is thrown into the sea, and harried into the beach in a grip as his skin dissolves, until he free a bullet into his own eye.

Four films that were released in 1960 paved the way for the new (and grimmer) wave of horror films: Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* provided the definitive model for the psychological splatter thriller, with its iconic phobic murder weapon (the knife that carves Janet Leigh up in the shower, which would make way for the profusion of knives, hatchets, and chainsaws to follow). Hans Roess's *Le Monstre* / *der Demons* / *Black Sunday* went Hammer's *Horror of Dracula* one step further, presenting the physical manifestations of metaphysical forces with grating detail and

THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEINTM WILL HAUNT YOU FOREVER!



explosive visceral impact. Helmut Kästner's *Agnes / Moll*, an allegorical morality play whose central movement brings its characters through a truly horrific realm of hell in a nightmare blend of sex, mutilation, and death that would inspire a wave of Japanese horror that are reportedly more extreme than any of the Western fare. Roger Corman's first Edgar Allan Poe adaptation for AIP, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, was not itself delivering any gross-out whatsoever, but must be mentioned as its subsequent Poe specials (*House of Usher*, AIP, and certainly) challenged Hammer's exclusive claim on the Gothic Grand Guignol school of horror. Though these films and their successors appeared and evolved together, they must be separated for discussion, leading up to the year 1968, when the modern horror film (which fully incorporated the 'gross-out' as one of its most vital dramatic and aesthetic devices) was born.

Kurosawa, Strindberg, and oddly numerous other-worlds were the precursors of the European horror films in the 60's, with Mario Bava's *La Morte di Dracula* / *Black Sunday* (1960) breaking the turf with a stylish and terrifying black and white tale of resurrected witches and vampires seeking a foothold by feeding on their own descendants 200 years after they were tortured and imprisoned. In the poignant opening, we see Ana branded and a block of Beton, its interior lined with spikes, hammered onto her form, 200 years later, the block is removed, her skin still smooth but marred

by the spikes and covered with writhing insects. As the dripping blood oozes into one of her empty sockets and re-enters her, we see the ribs swell and bubble in the sockets until her glowing eyes emerge, a vampire's head is burned, in horrific climax, in a fireplace, while another is stalked through the eye, Ana's vampire identity is revealed when her robe is pulled back to reveal her rotting, skeletal chest. The telling of 'gross-out' becomes a powerful and expressive narrative tool in Bava's films, unfolding, rather than at odds with, his telling of a powerful supernatural horror tale.

Many of Black Sunday's devices became part of Bava's vocabulary (e.g., the revelation of Ana's damaged chest is repeated verbatim to unveil one of the undead aristocrats' true condition in *Planet of the Vampires*, 1964), and his subsequent films continued to mesh the ethereal and the viscerally horrific with considerable (and occasionally brilliant) effect. Despite tragically low budgets and slapdash cinematography, the best films of this period, which include the undeniably fantastic Gothic classic *La Peste e il Corvo* / *The Whip and the Body* (1963), the first true giallo *Sei Donne Per L'Assassino* / *Black and Black Love* (1964), and the excellent *Operazione Paura* / *Kill, Baby, Kill*, Italy,

**STARE
INTO
THESE
EYES**

**YOU WILL BE
DEAD TO MAN
...BUT
ALIVE IN
DEATH**

PLEASE NOTE

The producers of **BLACK SUNDAY** recommend that it be seen only by those over 12 years of age!

THE MOST TERRIFYING HORROR
YOU HAVE EVER SEEN

Red / *Curse of the Living Dead* (1961), abandoned *Black Sunday*'s macabre look to embrace a lush, romantic use of color.

In America, the catalyst for an entirely contemporary approach to the horror film came from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. 'Violence has been written on the film, so I'll spare you my two-world' words, suffice to say the filmmakers who followed in Hitchcock's path were incapable of matching his daring artistry, and so merely replicated the film's most essential elements: the lustriously edited shower murder, the stairway murder, and the mother/father/sonal identity reversal of the shock ending. When Hitchcock's horrifying murder makes us feel the stabbing blade without actually showing the blade entering bleeding flesh (an increasingly effective play repeated by Tobe Hooper for most of Texas Chainsaw Massacre fourteen years later) has cinema's vend for gore spattered, explicit murders. William Castle's *Remains of the Day* (1961) opens with a bloodgushing stabbing during a bogus wedding, and Castle's *I Saw What You Did* (1962) secures the Psycho shower murder with gory blackness, while *Stranger with a Camera* (64) opens Castle's serial to use gore for the brutal murder. Axes, hatchets, and knives were also the preferred exterminator's tools in Francis Ford Coppola's *Demetrius II* (1963), *Night Shift* (64), a remake of the 1955 chiller that replaces the original's creepy suggestive horror with the 60's disfigurement fetishist), *The Third Killer* / *The Monkeys Are Loose* (65), Robert Aldrich's *Flash, Beak, . . . Scream* (1965), and *Chamber of Horrors* (66).

The most repulsive of all horror films to emerge in the wake of Psycho came out of Florida from two men who had established their reputations in the black and white 'trash' films, producer David Friedman and director Marshall Gordon Lewis. Having little money at their disposal, and in desperate need of an attraction to compete with the mainstream films, they chose to produce what Hollywood and even the budgeted low-budget distributors had not, a no-holds-barred, full color 'porn' film, *Blood Feast* (68). With a raped virgin (that fits with, but seems entirely disparate, macabreism), bloody arena, abnormal women, and fanatical photographer, all that *Blood Feast* had going for it was the repellent, blood drenched gory tableaux of murder, dismemberment, tongue-retrieval, brains pulled out, etc. The camera dwells lovingly over the butchery; nothing like it had ever been seen in American theatres, and the hotel box office (especially in the rural Southern states) assured there would be more. The 'Splatter' film was born, whereas the gory violence was the sole reason of film, and H O Lewis and Friedman put more money and a better story together to make

2000 Macesse (64). The splatter mayhem (including a cannibal harbored with an arm in a bowl was just as gruesome, the plot more engaging, but the authorities were laying on west. *Blood Feast* made by them, but 2000 Macesse had definitely playing theatrically in some locales. As a result, it wasn't as successful as its predecessor, but still turned a healthy profit. Friedman and Lewis parted ways with their third gore film, *Color Me Blood Red* (69), separately continuing to exploit the splatter genre they had pioneered. Lewis made *A Taste of Blood* (67), *The Gruesome Twosome* (70), *The Wound of Gore* (72), and *The Gore Gore Girls* (73), while Friedman would produce *Bea, She-Wolf of the SS* (74) under a pseudonym. Imitations soon followed, with directors like Andy Milligan and *Blasphemous The Undertaker and his Fate* (77), and directors like John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, 1970, etc) and Frank Henenlotter (*Black Cat*, (81)) would cite Lewis as an influence, but the mainstream films were incorporated graphic violence into its vocabulary. If *Scenes & Clips* (67) and *The Wild Search* (68) could deliver gory effects along with excellent storytelling and filmmaking, performed by Hollywood's best, why use a 'splatter' horror film made on a shoestring budget? Crime films, biker films, and especially westerns (with *Guns Quanta Spang*, 68 (67), Ralph Nelson's *Sister Slew* (70), Ben Maddford's *The Maning Party* (71), and Jacques Marquand's *Out Throat Mine* (72), being the most graphic, along with Sam Peckinpah's oeuvre) would, for a time, replace the horror film's violence claim on the 'splatter' genre. The 'porn', after all, is merely a dramatic device, it would take an essential transformation from within the genre to reestablish its value and presence, and reaffirm its need, as a genre, to break taboos and shock audiences even with a clarity and power unlike that of any other genre of film or literature.

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN HORROR FILM 1968

1968 was a seminal year for Western (especially American) culture. It is not surprising, then, that it also represented an important shifting of genre for the horror film. Culturally, politically, and artistically, revolution and transformation was the order of the day, if the horror genre were to address the unconsciousness, the unbelieved, the dark side of its audience, it would have to do so with a vengeance. The change came with a handful of aggressive, subversive films that used the techniques of the genre to strip it raw, exposing vital, angry nerves. If graphic violence were to engage, then that device too, would have to be turned on its head, the audience's nose rubbed in it, their eyes opened

new to the power of the literary culture they had grown much to. There were three seminal horror films in 1955, each of which clearly marked the birth of the modern horror film: *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Witchfinder General* / *The Conqueror Worm*, and *Night of the Living Dead*. The first, Roman Polanski's successful adaptation of Ira Levin's bestseller, marked the first major Hollywood horror film in decades; commercially, it brought the genre out of the depths of the low-to-medium budget slant (yet, though no-industry variant is rescued by its guise of respectability). Its production and popular success assured the economic growth of the genre, leading to the future box office hits based on bestsellers (*The Exorcist*, *Jaws*).

Rosemary's Baby also indelibly located the archetypal "Gothic child" into the popular pantheon of the horror genre: while the youth of America embraced the rebirth of the staid old in Stanley Kubrick's 1957 *A Space Odyssey* (also '58), another film, massive audiences embraced the dread of the rebirth of the Antichrist. The crest of that wave carried far into the 70's, with the likes of *The Exorcist*, (73), *The Omen* (76), etc. and the novelistic organic spawning of the monster children in *Brainstorm*, *It's Alive* (74), *Alive* (78), etc.

However, Michael Ruseff's *The Witchfinder General* / *The Conqueror Worm* (which I will hereafter refer to by its original British title) and George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* are of the greater importance in this article. *Rosemary's Baby*'s horrors are ideological and religious in nature. Though Polanski does make us feel Rosemary's (Mia Farrow) physical revulsion and distress at her situation, it is not sustained at the body level; even for female viewers, the fear is for the infant's nature and safety, and the horror at how satanic forces may have used Rosemary sexually, rather than the "body fear" generated by, say, David Cronenberg's lurid imagery in *The Shout* (76) or *The Fly* (83). Ruseff and Romero, however, orchestrate the use of violence — extremely graphic, strongly felt violence — to touch their audience at a truly physical, gut level. It is a deliberate, carefully controlled use of the language I have traced at such length throughout this article: the "gross-out" as a dramatic device in the hands of an artist, a storyteller, who provides a profound shock at deeply felt scenes of violation within the audience to make a point. *The Witchfinder General* and *Night of the Living Dead* represent the first calculated, sustained use of the language not to belittle the mastery with which Terence Fisher, George Franga, or Mark Krawinkel for language in the previous decade, but the respect of Ruseff and Romero's films had an immediate and clearly



IF "NIGHT OF THE
LIVING DEAD"
FRIGHTENS YOU TO DEATH
You Are Insured
For
\$50,000

A \$50,000 policy covering death from heart attack has been obtained through a leading international insurance Company in London for anyone in the audience during a performance of "Night of the Living Dead" during the special engagement of the theatre.



PRODUCED BY ROBERT ROSS

variable effect on every horror film (and those of other genres as well) to follow.

Since, the birth of the Modern Horror Film:
Both *The Wolfhander General* and *Night of the Living Dead* were treated with critical disdain, and were at the time easily ignored by the critics they were after all, just drive-in fodder. However, both were widely seen, as drive-ins and neighborhood theatres were still a viable outlet, and given a year or two could no longer be ignored as the shockwaves they generated were felt internationally.

The Wolfhander General was an expression of Reeves' disturbing meditations on violence. Set during the British civil war, the young hero (Ian Ogilvy) hatred for the authoritarian family Wolfhander General (Vincent Price giving a genuine performance) is forced into violence when Price tortures his fiancee Sara (Hilary Swank) and executes her father, a priest. Vowing vengeance, Ogilvy tracks Price to a tower where he is torturing Sara, only to be captured and bound, forced to watch his lover's agony until he will submit to the crime of witchcraft. Reeves has shown us a society wrecked with pain, death, and decay, with Price institutionalizing the most brutal tortures and executions (depicted in almost unbearable detail) for his own profit and sick pleasure, given the emotions the film has evoked in us, and the Wolfhander's role as the focus of evil) as well as Ogilvy's rape, Ogilvy's final escape from bondage and his attacking Price with an axe world, traditionally, he presented as a justifiable moment of release and revenge. Instead, Ogilvy's hacking away in the prison, twisting Price provides his vicious release: when his friend shoots Price in the head to put an end to his misery, Ogilvy turns on him like an animal, screaming "You took him away from me!" as Sara, unable to bear her lover's descent into brutal violence after the horrors she had already been subjected to, begins to scream in madness.

Despite the period setting (rooted in the Hammer tradition), Reeves had captured the elements of the terror with lightning immediacy, depicting a society whose morality and values have been so hoped that it can no longer contain the violence it has made even more explosive by finally expressing it. When it explodes at the end of *The Wolfhander General*, there is no right or wrong, only madness. Tragically, it was Reeves last film, a short time after, Reeves died at 25 years of age. Happily, George Romero is still with us, and his remarkable body of work shows that although *Night of the Living Dead* was a communal effort, it was his. And, Romero's name more remains associated with that so fully realized as his first film.

Night of the Living Dead harnesses its imagery and story structure from many previous horror films. Romero and writer John Russo admit readily their debt to Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*, which the unstoppable army of walking dead recall the party-faced undead from *The Children of Dr. Caligari* (1935), *Planeta* (1918 and 1937), *White Zombie* (1932) *Requiem of Dr. X* (1937) *Strangler of the Swamp* (1948), *Deadly Desires* (1958) *The Last Man on Earth* (1960), *Carnival of Souls* (1962), and *Plague of the Zombies* (1966), while the story has structural blueprints in *The Killer Shrike* (1958) and especially Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963). I've deliberately avoided mention of *The Birds* until this point to give, for no time, quite a harrowing and grisly film, with the best attacks and particularly Tippi Hedren's grueling ordeal in the attic being unusually graphic for a major studio released horror at its best with Romero's film is no strong. As in *The Birds*, the walking dead attacks are never explained, it is almost as if they were a force of nature, an elemental force without motive or reason. Comparison of the two films is telling: Romero mirrors Hitchcock's dynamics, pacing, and rhythms carefully, and even specifics of imagery (the former with his eyes peered within the body at the top of the stairs, the birds coming through the windows and decorative arms bursting in through the windows and doors) nevertheless clearly. Ultimately, though, Hitchcock hatches hope for his put upon band of characters, as the birds mysteriously call a truce and allow them to escape (a what?), and the latter film has the undercurrent of a black joke. Romero, however, is deadly serious (though the film is not humorless! There is no shelter, no respite from the desperate life and death struggle, and in the end it seems there is no hope...the survivors only to die, unthinkingly. Just as *The Wolfhander General* draws from the Hammer tradition that was, during the 50's, a progressive movement. Romero finds bedrock in Hitchcock's *Psycho* and *The Birds*, the dark forebushers of the Modern American horror film.

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(Thanks to Tim Lucas, Bill Kelley, Michael Price, Dennis Daniel and *The Things From Another World*, Tim Foreman, Chris Balan, and Alan Water for their knowing and unhelping assistance.)

THE MONSTER LIVES IN A GLASS CAGE

BY CHAS. BALUN

I am not often truly shocked, left numb and stark-eyed by very many films. In most cases, when it does occur, it usually results in a flurry of frenzied writing as an attempt at catharsis and a chance to make the press feel the pain. On only a handful of occasions have I ever felt that I had to write about the experience. It was a way of coming to terms with something that had shaken, not stirred, the very foundations of civilized thought.

There were movies that melted the paint off the walls of your mind and made you want to fanginate for brown panache. Films that spread plague to the house of humor. There were films that looked you straight in the eye and then ripped your spine out your ass. I wrote about them because there seemed to be no other way to bring the

demons to the light. Something in each of these films got under my skin and burrowed down deep in the marrow. They worked their way up to my skull and stayed there until words could be conjured to mimic their black magic.

Besides being the only film to come close to making me blow my Green, *Chimera!* Silverman was also the first of the bunch to force my hand into the arena of postmodern paranoia. But all too often, one's reactions to certain films reveal deep-seated fears, paranoias and hang-ups in the viewer that, no matter how intense, one would not want trumpeted in the nation's press. Sometimes, however, there is no choice.

I watched *In A Glass Cage* in three installments, like a mass series of an open Man

pedophile nightmare that was just too intense to be taken full strength. Contrary to prevalent expectations, the film is by no means an exploitation vehicle of any kind. Despite the murky subject matter, *In A Glass Cage* plays more like an earnest, albeit particularly twisted, art house film.

Actually, finding an audience for *Glass Cage* has proven unusually problematic. It doesn't seem to fit in anywhere. It did play at an East Coast gay and lesbian film festival, but even "special interest" audiences were no doubt just as ill prepared for *Glass Cage*'s jolting, soul-wrenching make-out as were their straight street counterparts.

This is not entertainment. This is a sobering, heart-breaking descent into a world filled with violence, cruelty, medical dementia and sexual perversion. One might expect as much from a film that begins with a sequence showing a tortured and naked, badly beaten young boy being photographed, kissed on the face, then chained to death by a bed. The perpetrator then calls off the reel as we cut to opening credits over bloody Nazi death camp photographs. No punches are pulled. This film starts telegraphing its message right away and you'd best buckle down, snuff the radio and get yourself ready.

Besides sharing common historical roots, *In A Glass Cage* remains a light year away from such boring, unimpeachable Nazi torture films as *S.S. Hell Camp* (Nazi Holocaust), *Ein: Die Röl* of the S.S., or *Love Camp 7*. In *A Glass Cage* is a film about torture—physical, mental and spiritual—but there is no titillation, no endorsement in the program.

After the heavy duty, black-and-white slide show of Nazi crematoriums, mass graves and standing legions of hollow-eyed walking corpses, *In A Glass Cage* formally opens with the man in an even long (the "Cage" of the title) as a result of his pre-credit suicide leap.

I must confess... it's really depressing writing and rereading this experience. I feel spiritually scarred in some place that can't be reached by even the most fervent prayer. This film is not merely about the evil and odious nature of just one Nazi doctor. Nothing so precise here. All of humankind is on trial and the verdict rendered comes shudders down the spine.

The paralyzed man's family hires a male nurse to provide the requisite around-the-clock care and then begins an odd alliance that eventually degenerates with one of the most unspeakable acts of death bed perversion ever seen in a major feature. And, make no mistake about it, in *A Glass Cage* production values are respectable. The photography is lush and surreal, the direction assured and the writing as dead as *Home* serious money was spent

here.

After the newly-hired attendant fails to administer an injection properly, it becomes quite clear that his motivations were other than conscientious patient care. Apparently the young man was willing to do or say anything just to be close to his Nazi overlord. He takes great delight in teasing from the doctor's personal strictly private, which only serves to whet his appetite, both sexual and violent, for the real thing. Reading about the death threat of pre-adolescents caught in similar arrest after lethal gas experiments was as quite a respite from the sordid which, in turn, leads to several scenes of some seriously bent silliness.

Forget *Macromaniac's* notorious stiff dick episode. This film literally comes in your face. And I don't pretty.

Among his mentor's actions, the youthful analyst is also kidnapping kids from town and then killing them in the promise away the paralyzed doctor did it during the holocaust days of the Holocaust. Nothing too graphic nor explicit (except for one very throat slitting) is shown, and, marvelously, no child is ever shown totally violated nor engaged in any consensual sex act. All scenes of that nature are suggested, but not seen in any detail whatsoever. Thank God for small favors.

(Though the film is in Spanish (with English subtitles), it appears a disclaimer of sorts follows the credits and assures its nervous viewers that no children were harmed in any way nor exposed to anything of a sexual nature.)

The evolving violence and dementia soon envelop the entire household as the male student holds the entire family hostage and begins a questionable relationship with the Doctor's young daughter.

The Doctor is clearly at odds with himself throughout the film, and, though he doesn't necessarily condone the violence of his most apt pupil, he is powerless to interfere. He witnesses the killings with the detached and dispassionate manner of one who has murdered for a living.

A key to the real identity of the young assistant is withheld until the finale when a revelation connects the images seen earlier in a photograph with its flesh and blood counterpart. The climax, both literally and figuratively, involves an act of lethal oral copulation that brings the whole twisted man full circle.

One man's evil has infected an entire family, made an entire generation, and as the film ends, hope for future change appears as bleak as the gray death camp photo montage was under the opening credits. In *A Glass Cage* explores and in many forms and finds our capacity for it to be endless. One violent or perverted art has the

mindless power to influence far more lives than just those of the perpetrator and his victim.

In A Glass Cage, with its relentlessly pessimistic view of human nature and man's propensity for monstrosity, seems to effectively negate what many scholars and critics have concluded about our endless fluctuating with the dark side. Nathaniel Hawthorne's preface to *Twice-Told Tales* (1887) that "there is no such thing as man's nature as a settled and full resolve either for good or evil, except at the very moment of conversion." That proves patently false in the damned world of *In A Glass Cage*.

Instead, this powerful, fearless and fearless and cautious film better resembles Shakespeare's oft-quoted line from *Julius Caesar*: "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones."

With *In A Glass Cage*, not just only lives, is threatened.

HERE'S BLOOD IN YOUR EYE

"STALKING SPLATTER'S SACRED COWS"

by Dennis Daniel

This piece is about truth. My own personal truth. The truth the way I see it. Many will disagree. Fine. I don't claim to be a know-it-all about the horror genre. I'm a fan, just like you. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's a critic. Yet here I am about to be critical. But it's my own criticism. I speak for no one else but myself. If there are any among you who agree with what I'm about to say, cool. Those that don't, cool too. Everybody's got a right to their own informed opinion. (Side: I said informed. If you're a hopeless fan-boy who believes that the idea of the above genre-related personalities doesn't sink, turn the page. Blind devotion is not my bag.)

I'm sick and tired of hearing things from
Upright, short-sighted, narrow-minded
tycoons.
All I want is the truth.
Just gimme some truth."

From the song "Gimme Some Truth"
by John Lennon

Many of my DEEP RED brethren are no doubt familiar with a column I wrote way back in issue #1 entitled "Whatever Happened To Tobe Hooper" or

"Tobe Or Not Tobe." The article allowed me the chance to express some of the demons that were plaguing me regarding the films of Hooper, especially the three turkeys he made for Cannon. It was my first genre related published piece and, since I had no previous reputation to be worried of, I laid the nerves bare, as I saw it, on how progressively awful his films had become. It was after seeing Texas Chainsaw Massacre II that I truly had my final taste of bile regarding the "fall from grace" of my horror genre heroes. I remember, among the throngs, dinging with





exclamation: "Imagine: Tobe Hooper and Tom Savini Together! This is going to be amazing!" Of course, we knew the results. I was so excited all that I wrote the article that very evening! (By the way: Hooper's *Jaws* is from Maine the only movie in my history of going to the theatre that I actually fell asleep watching.)

Since *Chamber 13* Hooper has done very little if anything of note. His *Spontaneous Combustion* (as far as I can tell, never received a theatrical release and went straight to video (I haven't bothered seeing it)). He also directed a TV movie (a target which one and couldn't be bothered watching it up. I'm not doing heavy research for this piece: it's all from the gut. Period.) The point is: Tobe is an overlooked one of the giants of the genre by many tiny! Because his first genre offering, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, is so fucking good that when I'm not going to take that away from him, but damn it I feel duped. I want more! Is there anything wrong with that?

When it comes to Tobe Hooper, I've heard my share of stories and excuses being made for him.

Everything from drug problems to studio interference has been linked with his film demise. Some of it may be true, some may not. All that matters is the end is the final product with his name on it. Look, I don't wish the guy any ill at all. From what I've heard from many people who have worked for him, he's a hard-edged, chopping meat cook-up anding hang-out with ya kinda guy. I just wish he'd make another good movie. These problems.

My own personal Tobe Hooper debacle was the first time in my horror movie loving career that I began to smell a rat. Could it be that all those "horror brain" horror film directors were just making time on reputation alone and quite possibly might have (shudder) no real talent talent? Was it all just press release bullshit?

Another person who enjoys a large following of blind hero worshippers is Wes Craven. Okay, I know, he created Freddy Krueger and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is a bonafide classic, but what else is there? (The answers, both with and without Craven's involvement, where horrendous money-makers, but as far as being movieable classics, they can all suck my

ment. They made a star out of Robert Englund, but come on. This guy is in the horror star. Most started Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Vincent Price...there are horror stars! These guys show disrespect! An Englund does a hide under make-up playing glorified slashers. Big fucking deal! Last House on the Left? Sure, it broke a lot of taboos and was daring for it's time, but I don't cuddle up to the VCR to watch it. The same goes for the Hotel Alive (Screed). Groundbreaking, yes! The work of a director leading himself, yes! A film to boost a reputation, off? No. I'm sure Wes took the safer way! The Segment and the Halloween is a really fun film too, but it's also a very polished Hollywood type product that ruins itself by having a confused Halloween of the Last Act type ending. I don't know about you, but that ending really killed the film for me. The whole film was shot up as being realistic. A story about "real" zombies. That denied. It was even based on a true story, the book by Wade Davis. Once again I'm not saying it was a bad movie. But considering the reputation Wes Craven has in the genre, it's not the film he should be his bet on. It's like The Hills Have Eyes II, Deadly Frenzy and Shocker are any indication of what Wes Craven is really all about, we're in big trouble.

Again, with Craven, you have a situation where many outside critics are being blamed for the poor quality of the products bearing his name. It hurts even more because you know Craven is good. Some of the Twisted Zone episodes he directed were the best of the new series ("Wordplay" being my favorite).

Another director who is currently on my personal shit list is John Carpenter. Here's a man with practically nothing but crappy movies on his roster. And yet, he is also the man who brought us one of the greatest horror films of all time. A film so revered by the humble writer that I count it as one of my favorite films, regardless of genre. John Carpenter's The Thing is glorious! (And the new re-release fan idea is a wonder to behold). But good God, those turkey's! The Fog, Prince of Darkness, They Live, Christine, yee-hi! Oh sure, he's done critically praised fare like The Usual Suspects, but his Halloween and consider it a ground breaker (which it is). I even dig Escape From New York. Big Trouble in Little China was a noble attempt but a huge my head to watch it. The Last of a Kind has yet to really deliver the goods since The Thing. What's John's excuse? He's had artistic freedom. What gives?

What gives? I believe it's that these fellows are fed up with horror 'biz. They want to try something new but we won't let them.

The greatest (and last) right in the sign that kind of thinking is George Romero. If ever there was a director linked with the genre, it's George. But think about it, what has George really done besides the

Living Dead trilogy and Halloweentown that has any real lasting value? When we think of George Romero, we think zombies! And hey, there's nothing wrong with that! It all George's war did was fight of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead, he's done plenty! The trouble is, he has done more than that and most of it doesn't stand the test of time. Films like Nightmares, Creepshow and Shocker (which certainly have their moments, but Shocker really put two star directors). Creepshow is the kind of film you watch on a boring Sunday afternoon, when the VCR is broken and it's running on some local station. But oh these zombie films! Nobody does them better (although Lucio Fulci certainly tries his best).

Romero is currently working on the screen adaptation of Stephen King's The Dark Half. Sounds promising but...

Shawn Jackson: Whatever happened to him? Dad business deals, mostly. Movie companies going belly up and leaving his projects in limbo (which really blows dead dogs because some of the announced projects like Lovecraft's "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" have mouth-watering possibilities). When it comes to films that might have been, Shawn is the greatest of hopes. That's all well and good but let's quickly examine the films Shawn did make. Re-Animator? Well, I think we all feel that it's the horror film of the eighties. Chris has written it enough many times, about the importance of this film and I agree without question. However, I don't believe Shawn captured the same kind of magic with From Beyond and Dolls, noble attempts that they may be. I'm writing more and more that I judge a film greatness by the amount of times I'm willing to watch it so, if I'm into writing a copy of it. The key is still out on Shawn (I'm still waiting to see Robotech). Let's hope he enters the genre again soon. (Too bad he didn't get to direct Henry, I should the kids, hard to writing his own token by now.) As with Romero, if Shawn is any reminder for Re-Animator that would still be quite a leather skin cap.

Now we come to the genre-related personality that has caused blood in my stool. I'm speaking about the so-called "father of horror", Olive Barker. Talk about being stupid! Through the years I've heard stories about this man that you wouldn't believe! Here's my Olive Barker scenario in a nutshell: It took Olive many years to write the books of Blood (which I might add, deserve their excellent reputation. They are truly magnificent short stories). He has been riding the crest of their popularity ever since. I've never found any of his really engaging (maybe it's because he hasn't had years to write them). They all seem quite overdone. The short story in my opinion is Olive's domain. Then came Olive's directorial film debut, Halloweentown, an interesting original vision that, although confusing at times, was a much needed

breath of fresh genre air... I loved it. Still do. (The sequel wasn't so hot. It had a lot of gory stuff and some real striking imagery, but it missed the beat overall.) The short story it is based on "The Hell Bound Heart" is also excellent. In fact I'll go so far as saying that "Pitersed" and the Caroliner are the most striking original movies to come to the screen in decades!

And that's it for Olive
The Doctor of Blooded Hellsbiter
Future of Horror: Yeah right
Olive: Hammer anthology the quintessential

example of a man who was made by his movie. The hype about that was... and still is... unrelenting through it all. First became a very rich man. Do you realize how many spin-offs, coming, biographies, sequels, and other assorted projects Olive has in the can? None of it is complete, I am afraid! (The only one I've enjoyed is the "Olive: Saturn's Hellbiter" comic from Epic.)

How about that Nightbreed huh? For the love of God, there's no excuse on earth for Nightbreed. What a mangled mess... of a movie that was! Remember the hype surrounding that puppy before it came out? There were Nightbreed monties on the cover of every horror mag. There was [many of which have since gone out of business]. I remember reading an editorial in Fangoria about how Olive was bored by the studio and it was their fault that Nightbreed was so staled. It was full of the typical whining about lack of proper promotion and other various studio interferences that led to the downfall of Nightbreed. Maybe some of it was true but... come on! Even if they promoted it as better than the Godard. Coming if it will would have been a bad film. Nightbreed is a truly mixed up clutter!

Still like the Caroliner Olive

Now we come to the film that sort of wraps this whole thing up — the remake of *Night of the Living Dead*. If ever a film has pretense, it was this one. All of the original creators were involved and Tom Savini, a good buddy of them all, would direct. From its initial announcement, many a horror fan scratched his head and said "Right? A remake? Why?" The reason became clear very early on — namely, George Romero, John Russo, Russell Striner and Knigh-Ten all got fucked the first time around with the copyright on the original. Doing a remake would be everything right and put the bat back in their court. Fine. Let's knock everyone's dicks in the dirt and create and her masterpiece, whatevs my guys? Let's make a film that speaks for the remade just as the original speaks for its time, okay?

No much luck

The remake of *Night of the Living Dead* will not stand the test of time. It will not be remembered. It will fade away and wench. It just tells me that a film with so much talent behind it proven talent, ignored out to be so dull.

The production was plagued by problems and contractual obligations (an R rated picture had to be delivered). Everything from financing to personal problems of various individuals involved had to be overcome. How do I know? I was there. Thanks to the good graces of make up-X masters David Sturges and John Mugg (with an okay from Tom Savini). I was given the once-in-a-lifetime chance of becoming a flesh-eater in a Romero zombie film. They even allowed me to bring along my partner Steve Mancuso and my buddy Calvin Wilson (who had a great scene with a torch). Once more, I got to eat flesh. (I'm in the truck exposition scene.) They were all wonderful to eat. The attitude of the set was very cheery and fun. But... you hear things, know what I mean? Things come down through the grapevine. I can't be helped. Still, I didn't expect it to be as bad as it was. The rushes looked great! Finally, I was shocked that it turned out the way it did. I feel like such a shit telling you this because everyone was so kind to me.

But, what am I supposed to do? Lie? The remake turned out to be unnecessary.

So, there you have it. A group of individuals with reputations that far exceed the quality of what they've done. Every one of them has created one of more classics, but they've got just as many, if not more, dregs in their barrels. Does that really matter? After all, they're all human right? Mistakes can be made.

Sorry, I don't buy it.

Look at somebody like Alfred Hitchcock. Here's a man who worked in the studio system for practically his entire career. Nearly every one of his films is a classic. In other words, he earned his reputation as a genius and proved it time and time again.

Most of these guys have been typed to us in magazines. We read press release-type articles about their films before they come out, get all hot and sweaty, get all self-love, and end up grudgingly watching all the pushing product. Now I know it's tough for filmmakers these days, but how long are we going to make excuses? Goddamn it, I'm paying good, first-earned money to walk into a theater and see their work. I don't like getting rammed into the bughouse.

I've actually lost my love of current horror. It's true. I'd rather watch the old classics. I'm tired of the hype and bullshit I read. I was suckered in for too fucking long. I don't even buy horror mags anymore. What are they going to write about? I even sold my entire collection of Fangoria. Think I'm a dick? Of all the films and events they've covered, how many are worth picking up and re-reading again? What are I going to read about? Clau? Dave? Rick? Prophecy? Apocalypse? (S) Fascist? These days, I stick to comics. At least they tell the truth.

Still, I haven't lost all hope. I'm just reading the labels more carefully.

NEKROMANTIK

Corpse-Banging as High Art



AN INTERVIEW WITH JORG BUTTGEREIT

By John Martin

The following interview was conducted at the second Black Sunday (Britain's premiere event of its kind) film festival in Manchester which featured screenings of Jorg Buttgerleit's *Nekromantik* (the least warning story of a boy, a girl, a dead body and a zipper-handle) and *Hot Love* (boy meets girl, boy loves girl, boy rapes girl and kills himself; girl gives birth to baby, baby matures into boy's mother and kills girl).

As for Jorg, whom I described in *The Deep Red Horror Handbook* as a "strange Aryan boy whose career focuses, rather than promises, to develop along wildly snarled lines", the following encounter gave me no reason to reconsider that assessment.

JM Jorg, this is the second screening that *Nekromantik* has had in Britain. Has *Hot Love* ever been shown here before?

well wenna have this poster with the woman and the corpse, kind of like *Gone With the Wind*...

Director Buttgerleit and dead girl

JB: Mr. It's an earlier one but it's just getting some attention because of some kind of success of *Nekromantik*.

JM: Where else have you shown *Nekromantik*, and what sort of response has it received?

JB: It's been shown two or three times. I think in the USA, one time in Britain, the second time was here, and yet it's there a kind of warm response in these kind of countries you know? In Germany it's more like "What's that?!" Have you tried to "what's the word?" put a bad light on our children? and so on. I'm a black sheep in Germany you know?

JM: Did you bring the *Tokaido*?

JB: No, it's a little bit different with this one because I just finished it and it's not like *Nekromantik* because I just wanted to make a film like nobody expected, so the people got really confused when I showed it first at Berlin, you know, they don't know what I'm doing. The critics are, they don't know what it is or what kind of film it is. Some people have said it's going to be a bit in about 10 years or so, it's gonna be a cult movie, but now it's too early, but I don't know. What is so difficult is that there's a lot of talking in it. There are some new kind of ideas that I told. The whole thing is not going very well, you know, it's some kind of work to watch it. It's very fast at the start, then it goes very slow, then out, it's over, it's very strange. I like it very much, but the people are getting confused, it's made of several different parts, and between the parts there's a rolling corpse. There are very strange relationships

"The last really good horror film I saw was *Dead Ringers*...and it wasn't even a horror film."

between all these things. They are doing very strangely together.

JM: But the imagery is not as extreme as along with *Nekromantik*, for instance.

JB: No, no with *Nekromantik* we tried to do something to let people know that someone - me - is making films and we make this poster with a corpse and the woman in the way Roger Corman used to do it. "OK, great poster, now we have to do the film."

JM: Did the poster really come first?

JB: No, not really, but it's a long way to go if I'm doing a film. I liked about a year. For *Nekromantik* we didn't pay anyone. Everyone worked for free, including the, so I took a whole year and during this year I found an artist and told him, "Yeah, I wanna have this poster with the woman and the corpse, that of the *Drive* with the *Wind*," you know, and with the new one it was a new poster. We tried to do a film poster that no one can think about what kind of film it is. I think it's the same with the poster. You've seen the trailer, but still you don't know what the movie is about. Strange.

JM: It's true that you've put out a comic version of *Nekromantik* in Germany?

JB: I didn't but a magazine with it.

JM: You've got a small magazine selling out weeks. I start, etc.

JB: Oh yeah, but we tried to make all the merchandise things for ourselves, so it's not a real business thing. It's more a kind of joke. So we made a picture soundtrack of *Nekromantik* and it sold out! We just made 500 copies and made it in picture (gig) with two

different sides and lots of music on it so you can hardly hear the music because it's so [makes scratchy noises] but it's cool.

JM: Did you have any cases of British customs confiscating *Nekromantik*?

JB: Yeah, about four times.

JM: Did they ever get back in you and say "Stop sending these disgusting films?"

JB: No. They just sent a message to the guy I wanted to send it to and they told him that they wanted to make a deal is that the expression? In the first of he tried to do it again. So I stopped doing it. So it was a little bit exciting to go through customs with a copy now, but they were just a little bit worried about the *Two Hot Lovers*, but I told them that it was not a porno movie.

JM: What's a German censorship like? At one time it was more liberal than in Britain, but now it seems just as bad, that's worse.

"I like the weird little ones like *Combat Shock*, *Eraserhead*, stuff like that."

JB: Yeah, I think finally it's like no censorship is interested anymore in getting any films over in Germany because they cut all things out, and when they show just these bits of the film with lots of talking, nobody is interested anymore, so the whole thing is going right down the... whatever. So nobody is interested anymore in horror films because all the guys who wanted to see horror movies had all the films on video before that stopped in Germany. There's just no market for that now. They damaged it by the movies.

JM: Did you have any trouble with *Nekromantik* in your home country?

JB: No, not yet! (Laughs) It's strange. They had some parts of *Nekromantik* on the TV in Germany and nothing happened.



Nekromantik film shot at night

JM: But you had problems in a town called Baselst, I believe.

JH: They showed Heilmann's but they refused to show *Hot Love* because it's, y'know, "against women." I make little tours through West Germany with my Super 8 film, showing them and introducing them. And that was during *Hot Love*. I made a *Hot Love* "World Tour" through West Germany. After Baselst, the staff rang me up one year later and told me that the people from Baselst wanted to see the movies again. They wanted to have a party and so on, and I said OK, you can book me and the film and it's OK. And then came the letter where they wrote to me and said "We want to play all the films but we do not want *Hot Love* because that's against women."

JM: So here's your chance to see the second straight Jorg. Are you "against women?"

JH: No!

JM: I don't think so. There's a credit at the start of *Hot Love* for somebody named "Freudenstein". Was that a real person named Freudenstein, or is that an homage to Louis Fuhr?

JH: No. But was just a sort of name for a guy who did the lights. He also did the Heilmann's poster later and he also did the *Hot Love* poster. I sent some to his drama, but they're gone away, so I can't show you them. They're an someone's wall somewhere.

JM: I also noticed that you used the soundtrack of some Fritz movies for the tapest film that Gustav Lohse goes to see in Heilmann's.

JH: Yeah. It's just that we wanted to have a real film soundtrack for it. To let the people know outside that there's a film going on. And it just happened that we chose that.

JM: Are you a Louis Fuhr fan?

JH: Not at all. I have to say that I'm not into horror films anymore, because there's nothing new in them. They're so boring! The last really good horror film I saw was perhaps *Dead Again* and it wasn't a real horror film, so it's kind of new

horror films that I like, different ones, the weird little ones, like *Center Shock*, *Brainhead* stuff like that. I never had machines made stuff y'know just because you know what's coming in advance... Nothing's exciting anymore.

JM: Was the baby transformation scene at the end of *Hot Love* intended as a tribute to *Brainhead*?

JH: No, but that's what people ask. It's just a baby. It's a very different thing. It's a funny movie and it's in colour. It's just. I have no intention to do a tribute, but it's OK if that's what people think.

JM: What about *Honor Heaven*, a film that hasn't been seen ever here?

JH: That's one of my earliest. I think it was done before *Hot Love*. It's another Super 8 movie, so it's about 30 minutes. Just a very short movie, remake of *The Shutter* and *Photograph* and *Gods* all of these kind of things but to make history, y'know, very fast.

JM: Have you seen *Porn-2000*?

JH: Not yet, but I've heard about it. I'm a big fan of Goddard movies, I used to see them all at the local cinema. That's my background. So *Honor Heaven* is just a joke. That's why when Heilmann's came out people got confused, because the film I was doing wasn't funny anymore. It's the same now, the critic said "After *Hot Love* he shocked us with Heilmann's, with a serious picture and now he's getting more serious and it's a very heavy, important movie" or something like that. But Jorg Gutgerth is not going to make it easy for his audience so all the people stay away from the movies because they are like hard rock.

JM: Another film you've worked on that nobody has seen over here is *Jesus - The Movie*. Can you tell us something about that?

JH: Yeah, that's a project from a guy in Germany. He asked a lot of different people, famous underground people. If they would



"There's nothing new in horror films anymore...they're so boring!"

each make a little part of the whole Jesus story, and he played Jesus in every one. He asked me if I would do a part and of course I wanted to do the things with the nails on the cross (without hammering nails in). It's just a one-day shoot. We just sat in a car with two pieces of wood. I picked Gakken, the main actor from Heilmann's, then we nailed him to the cross. That's it... the crucifixion scene. I don't know what it's called over here.

JM: What kind of a guy is Gakken?

JH: (Pauses) A strange guy. He had things about him so that he didn't like Heilmann's and he doesn't like the new one and yeah, that's very hard, to shoot a film with an actor who thinks, "I don't like this." He told me that one day he



wanted to do a big movie with machine guns and all that kind of stuff, but he doesn't like the theme at all because he thinks it was too sexy and all this kind of stuff. But he provided the soundtrack for the new one so in some ways he must like it... I don't know.

JM Are there any other interesting young German filmmakers whose work we should be looking out for?

JH I don't think so.

JM So there's no kind of scene of filmmakers and artists in Berlin? You're pretty much on your own?

JH There used to be a real underground film scene, more kind of art films, and during this art period I used to make films that you could laugh about. All the people used to like that, so one day this guy came over and wanted me to make a little film for the TV, but I

couldn't come up with a storyline because I had no idea how to do a storyline for TV. Then I just asked him to pay for my film and *Neukönigskanal* came out.

JM How have the lives of people in general and artists in particular been affected by the recent political upheavals in Germany?

JH Nothing! It's just an ordinary world there.

JM Yeah, but it's gone now.

JH Yeah, but during the time of *Neukönigskanal* hadn't gone. It's like at first it was funny for us, the people in West Berlin, it was no problem to go over to East Berlin, so it was an ordinary thing to do have all these people from East Berlin are coming over and filling the streets and will be getting a little bit tired of it now. So much up without history!

JM Did you go out onto the streets before the events?

JH No, there were plenty of people to do that. I didn't have to. I am always trying to do things that nobody else is doing.

The *Todesskiss* has just been released on video in Britain after much deliberation by the British Board of Film Classification by Homepress, a small distribution company run by Dave Fink, editor of the magazine *Shoe Fish* and fellow writers (and *Cones*) *Kankus* and *Stake*. Homepress can be contacted at P. O. Box 180, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 4ET, England. Jörg Buttgereit's new project is, brace yourselves: *Neukönigskanal*!

[Thanks to Geoff Dyer, Malcolm English, Andrew Fiechterman and Pip Kennedy for their valued assistance.]

NASCHY 101

A User Friendly Guide

by Shane M. Dallman

The fact that you're reading this book indicates that you are already aware that we, as fans of horror, have passed the point where the shockers of Kurosawa were largely ignored in favor of our homegrown product. Argento, the Bava's, Poli, and even Delella and DiMaio have received their due recognition in these pages and others. So why has it taken so long for Paul Naschy to get his share of credit in these parts? The man's been making horror films practically non-stop since 1967, functioning as star, screenwriter (as Jacinto Molina Alvarez, which is his real name), and as producer/director since the late 1970's. His reputation in Europe, especially in his native Spain, is assured, so what's holding him back here?

The answer is either that you might think Argento, Poli, and the other well-knowns command the attention of their audiences by virtue of their visual flair alone and also — from eye-popping camerawork to creative gore. Their characters and stories, though rarely less than interesting, are secondary, and have a better chance of surviving the dubbing job imposed on them as spoils to America. Though Naschy's films feature many striking, atmospheric sets in the flavor of Hammer's gothic thrillers, these are used to create a feeling of absorption and familiarity and do not induce the viewer to keep his eyes open for offbeat surprises. Naschy entered show business as a director for — even his acting career was an afterthought — and the emphasis in his films is on the strength of the characters, in keeping the role of the actor important. The sloppy dubbing routinely given to his films in the States makes his old-fashioned monster movies seem unduly murky — and a word about like *Woman Beast* (1980) has no chance at all.

Getting into Naschy's work takes a lot of patience. It also takes getting hold of the

To destroy the Monster,
was to destroy the
one she loved!!



Could she?
Could you?

DR. JEKYLL AND THE WEREWOLF

unmeasured video versions, as the television prints rarely add up to anything worth watching. If you're interested in getting started, here are some suggestions as to good starting points for the various tastes of various horror fans.

For those who enjoy Spanish horror primarily for the rich, moody atmosphere and aren't bothered by barely passing the adventures of Naschy's most famous character, werewolf Waldemar Daninsky, here a lot to offer. 1940's *The Crying* is a remake of *Good improvement* c.1950's

They're HELL ON EARTH

with LOVE, SMITH and BLOOD-SUCKERS

that will SHOCK YOU OUT OF YOUR SEAT
(not really)



The *Worstoff* re: the *Worstoff* Women directed by Maschy (Mickey Mouse). But the most recent entry of the series is 1973's *Curse of the Dead*, directed by Carlos Aured. An ancient curse is visited on Waldemar in a quiet village after the accidental death by shooting of a young gypsy man "mistaken" for a wolf. The story is familiar, but the direction, sets, makeup efforts and overall feel of the film are simply outstanding. This is also one of the few times in which the strength of the characters and the quality of the performances come through in spite of the English dubbing.

Those who enjoy that style of horror might also want to see Boris Khmurovsky's *The Devil's Playground* (1974). Despite the title, this is not a supernatural thriller, but a tale of medieval madness, torture, dungeons, a demonic alchemist and a peasant revolt, with more than a hint of Macbeth thrown in. If you don't go in expecting non-stop action, the look and feel of this film will slowly but surely win you over. The physical abilities of former weight-lifter Maschy also come into play in some bouts of violent fencing.

There aren't too many Maschy films which emphasize pace and action over atmosphere and character, and those that do (such as 1969's *Assignment Terror*), though they can be fun to watch, don't really show Maschy at his best. However, a couple, however, which qualify as decent "jumping off" points: 1972's *Wages of the Damned*, another work of Maschy's most frequent collaborator, Leon Khmurovsky, has a mystery-movie rotating-mechanism ritual to summon a small army of pale-faced, black-skinned women whose names Maschy plays Koshka, an Indian mystic, and two other roles caught up in the jumps on along with the men of Scotland Yard. That jump out of fan movies surprisingly high in the sex and violence departments, and it's all set in the house, really just more of Juan Carlos Calvo's (who also did the houses for 1973's *House of Psychotic Women*)

Night of the Howling Beast (1970) doesn't offer the Waldemar character much in the way of shocking sets and gripping story-line, but doesn't give him much time to think about either. This M.I. Seven film whisks him off on a trip to Tibet, and puts him up against cannibal cave girls. Responsible for the worstoff name this time, an evil Khan and his great speed, Wanders in tortuous chamber mazes probably intended as Spauld's answer to *Dead*, and the legendary Yeti. After a few violent worstoff attacks, dissections and tortures (one of which got this movie banned in Britain as a "Vulgar Story"), Maschy has to battle his way out of the Khan's fortress, once again putting his deeding talents on display. It's not one of the best, but it's great dissection fan.

Let's the governments think they're being captured, let me now direct you back to 1970, which featured one of Maschy's most overly horrible (and effective) works. Javier Guarn's *Handbook of the Mages* takes the *Handbook* Maschy's in the latter handbook, a half-witted, psychotic, and occasionally vicious character who finds himself working for a mad scientist—providing him with human victims after being told his dead girlfriend will be brought back to life for him as a reward. The various murder scenes are hideously graphic but the film's most infamous moment is a shocking scene, done mostly for real, in which Maschy sets fire to a group of rats which attack him when he discovers them brutally raping his girlfriend's body. This film won Maschy a Best Actor trophy at the Paris Convention of Fantastic Cinema (Point of interest: Maschy himself has a poor speaking voice and is dubbed even in Spain—the award only goes to those that don't seem to find acting their delivery of the lines)



Horrer Rises From the Tomb, another Carlos Aured film, has Haneby as an ancient, evil sorcerer and his modern-day descendant. The good Haneby takes a group of friends along on a trip to his ancestral home—and they arrive just in time to find themselves on the business end of a turn-

Depending on your personal taste or frame of mind at any given moment, each of the films described above can serve as a fine introduction to the films of Paul Haneby. If you enjoy them, there's a lot more to choose from. Barry Kaufman's *Video Wards* (Units 120, 1000 N. Lincoln, Chicago, IL 60614) is an excellent source for those who don't have easy access to the Haneby line-up. Leon Paul's *Blood Thinner Video* (44 East 50th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211) offers advantage over Haneby's a chance to see some of these films in their original Spanish language editions.

Haneby's 30-year plus body of work covers both ends of the spectrum and all points between in terms of quality, but ultimately offers something for everyone. And hey, nobody who's done this much for horror for this long deserves to be obscure anywhere. So let's get the ball rolling. If you like Haneby, tell two friends. And they'll tell two friends. And so on, and so on. And so on.



headed down by the evil Haneby, who at this point in time would very much like to have his severed head reattached to his body. Though it's not quite as graphic as *Moonblack of the Margat*, this film packs more violence per square inch than any other Haneby film I've seen, including exorcisms, garden tool murders, human sacrifices, and a chest-stopping heart removal. There's also an impressive gathering of the walking dead. Aured, responsible for the above mentioned *Curse of the Devil*, is obviously a director with a lot of talent. His other two Haneby films were *The Mommy's Revenge* and *House of Psychotic Women*. The former is just a decent bit of fun — the latter is an effective, non-representational murder mystery with a misleading American title.



—CHAS. BALUN'S—
MONSTERFOLIO



ANTISEEN WALKING DEAD



© Chris Babin 1988



Chris Babin

Designed by Chris Babin for the 1988 Play's World Tour

A line art illustration of the 1988 Play's World Tour, featuring Chris Babin and David Gorman.

GORE SHRIEK

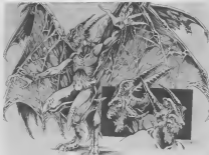


Gurch's Gallery





© Steve Sperling/Peter 1991



FULLERFOLIO

Portrait Of A JOHN McNAUGHTON

Serious Conspirator

Interview by John Martin

Deep Red Stinks Graham Avery, David Fleming, and Andrew Paulsen discuss
the movie's violent conclusions

Henry. Portrait of a Serial Killer was one of the most haunting pieces of film to emerge from the Eighties. It cut through a blizzard of cinematic thrills and shockless sequels with the ease of a well-thought bologna. Besides igniting a flurry of controversy and heated hyperbole from all corners, *Henry* once again proved that budget means little compared to brilliance.

Writer/director John McNaughton and producer Steve Jones discuss *Henry*, *The Runaway*, and several new projects, including *The Last Words of Docteur Solitaire* and *Carney Kill*.

BM *Henry* ends with a real kick in the pants.

JM We didn't want to end by having Henry removed by the police or put in jail or something, we didn't want to let anyone off the hook that way. Henry goes on into the distance, and he's the one person who's still out there, and we thought that would add more to the horror of the business.

JM Well, again, the real Henry claimed to have murdered—was it 340 people? I forget—over a 7-8 year period in which the police pretty much never had any idea who this character

was. I do find it a bit strange that people like Freddy are becoming more famous, but it's usually the bad guys who are the interesting characters to me, y'know.

BM The great comment seems to be that Henry is so disturbing because the viewer is forced to identify with Henry.

JM That's the idea.

BM I found that you were denying the idea that this guy really *is* represented all along, and then you resolved it away in the end, and ultimately I felt that the

unresolved was terrible.

JM I don't think there's any redemption.

JM I think that all of us are capable, we're all attracted to the Devil in some way or other and some of us are born addicted along our lines of development in such an unfortunate way, again. I think the traditional way to deal with someone like Henry is to say "Look how bad this person is! He shouldn't have done it, he's bad and he should have just said no and not done this." I think that's a little silly. I think there are those that are born to do

Yeah, I killed my Mama...



mutilated, maybe they get nervous just on their skulls when they are taken, or something, nobody knows, but there will be another Charles Manson, there will be another Henry Lee, Loran somewhere, somewhere. Which as long as there are human beings there are gangs, be disturbed ones who are somewhere missing that mechanism that stops them, when their anger must, from repeating and slaughtering someone.

I do think Henry had a code. Some people have a problem with drugs and can't control themselves and it may even make someone do it, it may cause someone in their family to do it, they cause them to lose control of an automobile, it may not, but there's something that's compulsive and they can't control and in a person who's compulsive, uncontrollable behavior happens to be, responsibility of stopping themselves from killing, well, in his problem, but I also think that we try and push out that there is a difference between them and the who put into go easily, in The Sweet. With Henry I mean like, I can't help myself from doing this but then, thinking this, are wrong? We all have our rights and wrongs.

Q: So what was Henry a protestant?

A: We did a fair amount of research, uh, it was his mother, that whole thing about his mother, it fits here and a line there were taken from actual quotes and woven into the dialogue, but y'know, I read Henry going, his life history in ten different newspapers, and the Core of it, he story was always the same but the details were always different. Henry was diagnosed as a pathological liar, so I don't think he knew himself exactly what he did. He has now recanted and says that he didn't murder anyone, including his mother, for whom he served a nine year jail sentence.

Q: They have hard evidence on a lot of his murders, which is why he's in jail. He claimed many more. In a lot of ways to get better treatment in jail -- he kept kept admitting to murders and police would come in from all over the United States and say, "Did you do this one?" and he said yeah, I just happen I was out, y'know, then makes all previous murders, and so when he got up

recently, 400 murders he just repeated and said, no, I didn't do it.

Q: To me in many ways, the more interesting story is what happened to Henry after he was captured, which we talked about during a group published *Examiner of Crime*, because playable a man which feels such a deprived background, and it's so true on the social scale in every way, and how he's accepted for murder, and every time he starts spinning his words and continuing to another one, he becomes more popular with the press and he also becomes the police's buddy because some police jurisdiction has a bunch of unsolved murders. So they just call Henry up and they say well, because it can't be and again a lot he books and Henry went on TV, they were writing about him.

Q: He's got a phone in his cell.

A: Right, they're flying him around the country, visiting police jurisdictions and then he started making demands, y'know, I must have a fresh carton of Post-it note paper, I must have a hot thermos of coffee, I don't eat

chickenburgers anymore, I must have steak, and I want a VCR in my cell or all those, so it's very strange that it was in many ways, the last thing that ever happened to him.

Q: It's like the situation we have over here with the "Bloom Murders", who sexually tortured and killed children, back in the states. He 20 years in jail they're now making a lot of the watch, talking about they might revisit the trial case of some of the victims, and the media has turned them into, well, in your way "sympathetic".

A: It keeps people off Death Row in the U.S. also, y'know, as long as they can come up with a new crime to solve every case and then, instead they get away with it.

Q: Given Henry's fall with real life events, is it hard on him when going on in the courtroom?

A: There was never anything. We did some legal research, very late, but enough to establish, I feel what Henry can come after us for is basically information of character.

"I find that good people usually lead boring lives."

JM: Interview by's continued

SA: Our interview is typical lawyer fiction: has preconceived ideas about what could happen, so wanted to adjust to those things. That's why there's a disclaimer at the front of the thing.

JM: Right. In terms of sex (and with Verónica, they were afraid of possible litigation).

SA: You're talking about the victims here too.

JM: How did you feel about that? When you concerned with the feelings of the deceased?

JM: Well, discomfort of the things at the film are based on the actual fall guys at all no.

JM: You're talking about setting out to re-define fiction: is the more extreme way possible with Henry, and the discomfort why that you did not about that task reminds me of *The Last Movie On The Left*, which was not a slaughter fest, but instead focused sharply on a thoroughly ironic. Was that an important film for you?

JM: Right, I see it until it came out on video, and by that time I felt it wasn't like I've stated, but again I was the guy over the reality of it. That's the premiere scene, if you remember that, was very, very effective. I think the movie aged very poorly. It really hurt to think his was. I took my afternoon away and made it into it, it's fascinated the music, recorded on the picture.

SA: And that was it, almost purely concerned that just should not have been in there.

JM: Yeah, again to me, you have to be very careful. I mean, there's a horror which is literally where you can be scared, and it's great, but when you get very really, we didn't have the money to make Henry breathe through special FX, so we made it fairly by by making it feel. Plus the fantasy was another you can't tell him it, and when you do that, you have to be very careful about humor — if can't be going type humor when they just around and say a gag to the person next to them. In me that really liked you out of the story.

SA: John's original idea was to do a documentary-style depiction of a week in the life of a serial killer. By staying with that idea of a being documentary style. I think that's a what made it so much said to. There's no talk — we don't have any theory for any talk, but we used it to be advantage for once.

JM: So how would you compare and contrast it with the very funny style they used in a film with a similar subject: Michael Mann's *Manhunter*?

JM: I can comment on that because I read the book. And *Dragon* obviously longer, thought it was to be a long mystery (more psychological thriller). I guess love to gently it easily. I thought that book was wonderful and I fantasized the plot was much and please the hard enough make a film and I don't want to talk about other two movies, but I didn't care for the film at all. I really think I was a TV business when working with him. So I didn't care for it. I don't like *Blonde at the Centre* as a book as much as I like *The Red Dragon*, because it focused more on the good guy side and I find the good people usually leading lives.

JM: I got the impression in your movie that Henry didn't ever get off as what he was doing. He just had to do it.

JM: That probably came from Michael, the way he stated it. It's a very very low-key.

JM: How did you get all those glowing testimonials for Henry from Richard Poirer and others?

SA: That was kinda second-hand. We didn't have it in writing.

JM: We had a lettering from John Waters, who is a big fan of the picture and said that a line possible judging it and I sent him all the back. He wrote like a great guy.

SA: He's been talking to play a man of ideas for some time. Has he sounded you guys out about that?

JM: He's got a great face, a great look and has lived his picture, he's a *Manhunter*. Mike's business is John Waters but what he's doing.

SA: You got an amazing quote from Stuart Gordon.

JM: Steve started with Stuart Gordon at The Cagney Theatre. He did roles stuff for two of their plays. The Cagney Theatre is like I think it's more familiar with The Living Theatre, they were like the wild ones, wild masters of the theatre in their era and Chicago theatre, which is incredibly wild and wonderful, and justifies an incredible amount of excellent actors and actresses — The Cagney Theatre was kind of like these wild dogs, yeah, they did the crazy stuff and Tom Fowler came out of The Cagney Theatre, he did Richard Poirer, John Montague and a whole bunch of other people who've become famous and successful. They were quite a crew.

JM: Stuart Gordon as a something along the lines of "Miles, what I've achieved under bigger budgets look good?"

SA: Yeah, that's what he told me. Right after we got done with Henry, he was one of the early executives who he said that for low (theater) budget they weren't getting as good most as out there, and that we should be working more closely, and three years later, we finally got another job.

JM: Henry's original budget was \$100,000, and I remember Bulgatta the time at about \$150,000, but that was before it was known up. With the blow up, he'll see into it, I know what it is, but the finished product was \$111,000. The American was two million — stress started up to make a movie after \$420,000 in Chicago than it was to make one for two in East to Hollywood.

SA: We had early videotaped people for Henry.

JM: Nobody looking over your shoulder and saying (sarcasm) "Well, I guess, about a line, another angle, get a reaction, that for that, do that, do that, do that." When you work at an entertainment company, it's like walking in the elevator, it's like you've got a lot of people looking over your shoulder — do this, do that, everything's more, everything's more complicated.

Henry (Michael Fassbender) and Ricky (Timothy Spall)

DR: Does all this make you reevaluate how the Hollywood system works?

JM: It is not. I've already shot me mouth off and put my foot in it in past and I'm happy not to do it again because that's where I feel things will make.

SA: That's where the money is.

JM: It's either to make a picture — by and to be it from your friends and neighbours and see how far you get.

SA: On Henry, the fact that there was no money at all meant that the people that worked on it just wanted to do a good job. The *Batman* was done more in the older way of doing things and the people who worked on it at that was their job and that was what they did make-by-work. That's all.

JM: a matter of love...

SA: by any means. That meant some people were good at their job like in any job, and some people were less at their job but would get another job and continue to work and were their young and loved themselves and their families. On Henry there wasn't any money.

JM: Yeah, nobody fed their families on Henry, believe me.

SA: Unless they had real estate funds as.

JM: Like in family of gentle or something.

DR: I was wondering if Michael Fassbender now that he's got some "respectable" credits under his belt, has tried to distance himself from Henry?

JM: No. Michael was in a kind of position where Hollywood is (going from a little bit to bad) gay roles. But I don't know when Hollywood is going to get to the fact that he can be a very good actor, leading man, and today Henry is the only leading role.

SA: Which turned up at the Hollywood Film Festival in California and basically made friends with the entire town and the entire film community. "Wow, they see him in the top line picture and then they want Michael Fassbender, who's this



"We did some legal research, very little, but enough to establish that the real Henry can come after us for, basically, defamation of character."

gentle bear of a guy, and he did a great job.

DR: When has happened with The Runaways?

SA: The Runaways was a logistical nightmare — we started in Chicago ended up doing it in L.A., there were three different regimes of executives but before the picture got done, the company that we were doing the picture for went back up. It's kind of a miracle that the picture even got completed, and now it is, we just have to let it go and they finally decide to release it.

JM: In some ways, that turmoil and slide worked to our advantage because all of the executive teams kept leaving, due to the collapsing nature of Atlantic Entertainment. Consequently

we had no interference during post production and editing, so it's pretty much untouched. I mean as director's eye is the end that's going to prevail unless someone buys it decides to edit it, which is certainly a possibility, given the history of the film, but so far, each time they would try and have us alter the film, they would blame the company rather than us, and so it worked out in that respect in any case.

DR: But there were so many problems you came up against while you were making it. Sexual harassment, corruption...

JM: There were a lot of problems.

SA: We had a pretty big earthquake.

JM: There were a lot of problems. It was the first Hollywood project for both

"There is something about just delving into blood and guts, and revelling in it, that is...part of being human."

of be and he said 'gah'. I was like 'asking you are it morning and getting punched and he face was purple it to last at night. basically. Making that picture look about ten years old to him. The more things about your teeth-on-teeth, about of...about... and was managing to push the picture. It's a fairly different kind to *Sliver* and the other two. I think it's more like to tell it to him, clearly, although it's very tongue-in-cheek, not gag humour.

BJ: It's much closer to a fantasy, also.

JM: You type much more of a traditional sci-fi fantasy.

BJ: More palatable to audiences in general while it's literary. All these people are ripped off, it's not like *Sliver*...not at all.

JM: But again, Tommy Twine opens the picture, and Tommy's a good thing in Chicago was with the second City Company. If you've ever seen *Saturday Night Live*, that's exactly what Samuel City have been doing on stage for years — not comedy. Tommy came out of the improvisational comedy school and he's quite a comic, quite a funny guy, and he's a great in *The Damned* and it's pretty funny. It's more of a risk. It will move for management, then something I feel makes you think, 'smash, go! I feel offense, you very deeply'.

BJ: In the projects that you're working on now, which of these strands are you going to develop?

JM: We've got two at three. *Sliver* — we're hopefully about to conclude negotiations to buy a William Burroughs book called *The Last Words of Chuck Schultz*. Chuck Schultz being an American gangster circa 1930s and I think that when we get back on Monday we're going to have an idea out to Laurence. Laurence and I are in *Sliver*, Burroughs doesn't own the book. If he did, I think we would have made a deal months ago.

BJ: That property's been around a long time, hasn't it? I used to remember that of one time Keith Richards was going to play it for just

JM: I talked to a producer in L.A. and he said that Keith Richards had optioned it or was tried to option it or

had talked about optioning it at one point, and at one point Elton Depp was going to do it. Yes, it has been around for sometime.

Richard Price, who co-wrote *Sliver*, and myself, have just finished a script for it, called *Blue-Right Up*, which is about a young man whose the last spent and he joins a traveling carnival.

BJ: This is then your next personal experience, isn't it?

JM: Yes, it is an autobiographical piece, and I just bought a book optioned a book called *Carney* (R), which isn't funny, it's more of a somewhat mystery thing that takes place in a carnival in 1937, and there's a screenplay on that which is out.

BJ: Can you tell us something about your experiences with *Carney*?

JM: They run games and have freaks and show crazy rides, so it's great fun. There were a lot of people in the carnival who are pretty disreputable, but that sort of people hanging out with in the carnival that I wanted to know some of the most interesting and good people. In terms of people you could watch on one day in a movie. The sort of the world might not see them perhaps, some sort of origins but there were some really top-notch folk in the carnival I involved with. I was taking a game called the glass globe. I was also taking pictures while I was in the carnival so I have a series of photographs of that which we are going to use in our next version of the script.

BJ: I think you mean *Johannesburg's Santa Dangle*, which which is set in what I would imagine is a similar milieu?

JM: I didn't hear it, the way I did with *Sliver*. But sometimes things come along in the house game with a new person, a *Carney* character, a *Day of the Dead* and then it will come again. I think it's like film is general in the story, or the music business. There are landmark works that take it again from the millions come and a kind of pattern out for a while. I don't know what to think of films now because the

MPAA has so censored the game. Again, when I read *Three Chances* or *Massacre* (I which is one of I might have started). *The Damned* is like a little story compared to that, and it's closer to me about that it was more or about something X rating for *The Damned*. Fortunately *The Damned* was not classified badly by the MPAA, a little bit, but not badly. They were sort of happy with us, in a way.

BJ: Is that because you personally brought out Richard Hellman, the Chairman of the MPAA?

JM: We had to, because we were in a bind, but he was pretty hot with us, it's my opinion. But really, the *Three Chances* I thought it was like *New Line* have been in the business for a while now, and I couldn't see why they were so strict about it, because I was quite obvious that none of that stuff was on right to get into the screen, and it was behind the scene. I haven't seen it, but I've talked to the writers, and from what I understand, they've cut everything.

BJ: I think that technically, they can do anything now, so far as showing you anything, they can show you cutting of violently bodies being ripped apart and usually we'll a time for the imagination to take over again and the stories to get a little better. *Harer* doesn't just come from seeing that sort of stuff. I think everyone's going to get aroused at all this blood and gore. I think what's really horrifying is what it is you mind and what people do to each other, as opposed to what you're just splashed on the screen.

JM: Yeah, but I guess there is something about just delving into blood and guts, and revelling in it, that is...part of being a human being.

GUINEA PIG

Cutting-Edge Splatter or Porno Gore?

By
Chas. Balun

"At worst, is not this an anguist world, full of nothing but beasts of prey, four-footed or two-footed?" Thomas Carlyle, 1833

It was inevitable. The genre has been flailing with the concept for decades, as *Guinea Pig* was a film designed to be made by someone, somewhere, somehow. In many ways, it is the climax in a cycle of third-kill mutilation opus, first popularized by Herschell Gordon Lewis' primal gore shock *Blood Feast* (1963) and perpetuated through the years by films such as *Last House on the Left* (1973), *Squid* (1976), *Last House on Dead End Street* (1977), and *Maniac* (1980).

Even mainstream films like Paul Verhoeven's *Hardcore* (1979) and John Frankenheimer's *52 Pick-Up* (1986) have alluded to the contents of actual "snuff" films purporting to show victims being tortured to death.

David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983) addresses the issue forthrightly and comes up with answers as disturbing as they are compelling. The idea that a video signal sent from stations specializing in hardcore sadomasochistic death tortures could irreversibly warp the consciousness of the viewer is a chilling, paranoid, hyper-revolutionary concept that Cronenberg explores to the fullest.

In Joe D'Amato's sleazy *Sexmaniacs in America*, a wealthy degeneratein playboy shows possibly insane black and white images of graphic brutality in order to sexually excite partners apparently unable to be aroused by the "snuff" filmstar's images in which he specializes.

Squid (aka *Slaughter*), Roberts and Michael Findlay's bungled attempt at capturing an audience with a pathological blood lust, is a complete wreck of a film, but serves as an ideal example of the hysteria

generated by a film that proved it was "too real" to be simulated.² No one who had seen the film was fooled, but they didn't stop protesters (some hired by the producers) from causing an international outcry for outstripping the actual significance of both the film and the particular riot in question.

Last House on Dead End Street (1977) is probably the most concerning of the films dealing with the actual making of a "snuff" film, though both *Effects* (1980) and Larry Cohen's *Special Effects* (1982) make great use of a murder theme. In fact, the most surgery scene in *Last House on Dead End Street* showing a blond woman being dismembered and reconstructed in edited scenes in a far more disturbing manner in *Guinea Pig*. *Horror* has a critical, salient point. Despite *Last House's* admittedly vicious, degrading and corrupting scenarios, the film is still operating within the paradigms of accepted techniques of both storytelling and filmmaking. *Guinea Pig* departs with these cinematic arrangements and simply, directly and unfortunately presents a pathologic unsalability that provides us with nothing more than a man, a woman, and a bed. Only this time, blood is the body fluid of choice.

Though a good name may be made linking a film like *Guinea Pig* with its splatter movie past, another essential element must be considered in order to view it in a more contemporary perspective. As the horror genre has mutated and shape shifted in the past in order to satisfy its audience, over-changing tastes, so also has the entertainment industry in general and the news media in particular. Audiences that were probably shocked

with the violent lynchings in *Lovers' Blood*. Fear are no longer conveyed quite so easily.

The movie style films of the 60's and 70's have made way for their modern counterpart: the *Faces of Death* series, through videos featuring sadomasochism and speed metal, simulated war footage and low news reports that have absolutely nothing to do with the imagination.

Though *Guinea Pig* packs an undeniably perverse visceral wallop, it still remains somewhat predictable because of its theatrical content. Such is not the case with completely unedited, live news footage that suddenly appears on your screen without the benefit of even a primitive establishing shot. *Guinea Pig*, because it was shot on professional quality video, may, in fact, even be mimicking the in-your-face style of the movie video paperback.

Vile and unreformable as *Guinea Pig* may be, it remains a deliberately staged, highly manipulative vehicle for a simulated ritual dismemberment and not an actual snuff film. Because it is just that, the viewer is provided with the necessary perspective in which to deal with the situation in hot and particular manner.

One viewer's escape quite thin easily when confronted by the suddenly live news broadcast that jump cuts to scenes of barbarity, brutality and violence that no splatter film, regardless of era, has yet approached. Nothing, not one thing is even the most notorious splatter film can match the unbridled sexual terror and visceral peristalsis unashamedly provided by CNN's live broadcast of disgraced politician K. "Bud" Dwyer snarling a 44 magnum revolver into his mouth during a press conference. What you witness next can only be described in terms you must wrench from your own heart of darkness. The live ultra-graphic on-screen sounds (subsequently circulated on various underground videos) of that unfortunately flayed and dispassing human being unleashes a torrent of breaking and contradictory emotions in the viewer that no act of simulated violence is capable of under any circumstances.

The culpability of the media is not really the point here. No one is being made for censorship of any sort, but it is important to note the ever increasing levels of violence in film, television and real life in order to more fully understand the breaking ground that opened a film like *Guinea Pig*. The simple fact, not few politicians, policemen, judges and neighbors would care to disagree, is that some people are exposed to more violence than ever before in "civilized" history.

Perhaps we have always been (and always will be) a violence-prone species, but no one can deny that since the revolution in communications, a whole

plethora of more people know about it. They're been reading, watching, hearing and now tape recording it more frequently than at any other time since the first stone was splattered in first human blood.

Through its real roots may lie with the primitive, *man-things* they found in films like *Sole*, *130 Days of Sodom*, the *New* *Sho Wolf* series, *Mama*, *Faces*, and *Men Behind the Sun*. *Guinea Pig* was at least a necessary nod to the *Brave New World* of televised communications, atrocities, fetters, place works, sexual murderers and global terrorism brought to us daily by the most complex web of communications ever known to man.

Thanks to that very same worldwide communications web, a Japanese support letter was posted on ABC TV's "BBDO" national newsmagazine and, once again, a key link was to be made between ultra violence, entertainment in film and human psychopathology. The letter was alleged to have an extensive collection of splatter videos, some unashamedly doctored to include scenes of his own taped adventures splated right next to their cinematic counterpart. Now, this, indeed, is creepy stuff, further exacerbated by the discovery of *Guinea Pig*, the film alleged to have been the inspiration for the support murders.

Other films, specifically those in the *Freaky* the *Hick* and *Halloween* series have been singled out as several capital cases as being influential to the murderer's state of mind, but rarely has the connection been as damning as it was in the case of *Guinea Pig*.

Though the films were subsequently banned in Japan, any one who has seen the notoriously violent, usually perverted scenes in such Japanese animated films as *The Wandering Sad*, *Supernatural Beast City*, *Demon Apocalypse* or *Kamuro Hunter* is familiar with the Japanese way of dealing with taboo subjects. As shocking and disturbing as *Guinea Pig* truly is, there exists a tradition of unabashed brutality that extends far back into the bowels of Oriental culture, darkly illuminated at times by such novel concepts as *Samurai* warriors, *kami* hair, *karaoke* plots, death marches and the numerous erotic and lethal tortures rooted upon the various warring eras throughout history.

Both the Japanese and the Chinese are no pious when it comes to playing for keeps. Witness the heinous Eastern Asian tradition of *Long Tchi's*, a method of torturerecreation dating back to the 17th century that involves the slow and deliberate cutting into pieces of a condemned criminal. In *George Batell's* *The Terms of Men*, a book detailing the relationship between violence and religious ritual, a particularly disturbing photograph bears mute testimony to the extreme levels of sadistic cruelty employed by the Emperor's executioners. A psychotic

victim, bound in some manner of confining, is being strangled of his appendages, nipples and skin by a completely untrussed steel bunch of torturers because their Emperor has decreed that the victim's/a's original sentence of being burned alive is no longer true!

Though this method of torture dates back to the Meiji Dynasty (1844-1911), the explicit nature inherent in such acts is echoed in contemporary films like the sickening strictly contemporary *Man Behind the Sun*. Its modern parallels lie with the World War II Nazi death camp films, but the depths of cruelty and debauchery exhibited in *Man Behind the Sun* show the Japanese Imperial Army to be on a class by themselves. *Kamikaze* are performed on living humans, others are contaminated by experimental chemical or viral agents, while some are thrown into decomposition chambers until their ruined guts come spilling out their noses.

Guinea Pig did not just appear from a cultural vacuum. It was most definitely not a virgin birth, as it is rather perplexing that modern-day Japanese society treats with such fury over a 90-minute videotape. Presumably labeled as *Guinea Pig* may be, it has been seen and done before, and it joins the crowded ranks of films, books and songs that have been accused of everything from propagating suicide and serial killing to teenage pregnancy and willful destruction of gated highway speed limits. *Guinea Pig* is not without some degree of blame, of course, but still it is not the problem, but merely symptomatic of a far greater and complex one. Resident violence and emotional behavior will simply not go away, regardless of how often we vote, pray, fast, work or legislate against it.

True, the film is a repellent, water grinding experience, but, alas, it's only a movie, only a movie. And a cheap one at that. One intense act, one pretty woman and a damaged young Samurai psyche that make us feel Spaulding's *Maniac* look like Oliver's *Henry V*. The dialogue is sparse, guttural and one-sided. The woman never says a word. Immediately after her abduction, she is dragged, bound and gagged and she stays that way for the entire film.

The camera almost tenderly and lovingly scans, pans and glides throughout the boarded up, gut-wrenched Samurai slaughterhouse, pausing only long enough to steady itself for the next revolting close up of seeping disembowelment. Lushes are rot, stowed and stashed apart, with not a dotted being spared. With raw shot clarity, every peeping nerve, cracking bone and searing artery is given its due. And, contrary to audience expectations, the "apical effects" are of an unusually high caliber. Though it was rumored in some circles that actual corpses

were mutilated during filming, there is not one shred of mayhem that couldn't have been effectively rendered by a gory-porn FX artist. Even the one sequence in which you might expect them to use the real thing (in this case a chicken) employs such cuts and deceptive angles that the descriptions gag is exposed for what it is. Other FX though, are terribly realistic, especially the scenes of disembowelment that involve not only intestines, veins and large arteries, but also livers and chests.

It is not only the degree and frequency of the violence that is especially troubling, but the obscenely detailed, microscopic close ups thrust in your face without respite for the entire video! *Porno pie, infant!*

Despite the fact that the woman is young, attractive and physically alluring, no attempt is ever made to exploit the sexual angle of the bondage sequence. No male is ever shown, nor suggested, as the woman is covered in white then red, about the entire time. The Japanese exhibit a very pure, relaxed attitude regarding sex and violence. While permitting the most vile and aggressive acts to be explicitly shown, they always stand upon optically censoring even the most harmless shots involving frontal nudity and/or public heat. The import Japanese leave due out of Koppens Doudale's *Camelot Moment* is rendered nearly unwatchable due to the omnipresence of the "low-lying dirt" that obscures much more than just a patch of pubic hair. Even at the climax of *Guinea Pig*, when the woman is sliced open with a scalpel and then vivisected, the bloodied, leaping lengths of intestine are strategically applied so that they completely cover the terrible triangle.

Finally then, the woman, who has remained semi-conscious throughout, is finally awakened in slow motion. Blood geyers in five horri-fic as her dispatched hand claws against the wall and splats to the floor. The moaning, staggered-wailed Samura then retrieves the hand, raises it to his lips, and with a wriggling tongue, licks the blood off the wrist. Then, an eye is popped out with a tablespoon and crushed on with ludicrous abandon as soap opera style music swirls in the background.

You wanna live? He wants a snake.

Even the dialog in Japanese without subtitles, the Occidental mind can only speculate just what is going through the man's head as he releases and puffs continuously on the rolling floor. The camera then wanders off, revealing a room dominated with death masks, jars full of pickled chicken heads and plucked eyeballs, an aquarium stocked with human hands and various decomposing body parts swimming with worms and maggots. He all in your face. You can almost smell it. Then, the film ends like it began in true horror show style--

hand-held point-of-view shots of the next potential victim being stalked at the railway station.

Guinea Pig is a visitable cinematic experience, but certainly one well in touch with our times. It seems nigh impossible to fuge redemptive and subterfuge towards this type of film whilst all around us, reflecting on our television sets, are documentary-style video images of the horrors of the real world. AIDS, famine, religious "holy wars," beaten and abused children, racist murderers, terrorist bombers, chemical weapons, environmental catastrophes and the latest designer-style serial killings.

Violence seems endemic to our particular species. We will remain at war, perhaps perpetually, both from within and without. The horrors of *Guinea Pig* echo the horrors of the human mind. Until we come to grips with that black-hearted abyss that lurks within, there will always be another battle to fight, another victim to kill and another *Guinea Pig*.

WHAT YOU WILL NOT FIND IN ANY OTHER BOOK

Recalling Some Favorite, Forgotten Horrors

by GREG GOODSELL

What other subject, save World War II, has been so exhaustively researched as the horror film? In search of different and exciting new angles for this cinema phenomenon, the student and fan has been deluged with treatises on the existential nature of the *Jane Austen / Mad Doctor of Blood* island series, the method favored by actress Pease (Don't Look in the Basement, 1974; Encounter with the Unknown, 1974), Pollock, and the Jungian nature of director Charles B. Pease (Legend of Boggy Creek, 1973; The Town That Dreaded Sundown, 1977). Approaches to some owners border on the absurd: who really cares about the body strands snipped from some prints of *The Hunch-Dr. Hoochack* (1960)?

Not too long ago, *Reeltime* reader such as I, *Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1957) and *Wildcat* *San Geron* (1960) was looked upon with scorn; today, nostalgia and the release of even far inferior films since their have elevated them to "semi-classic" status. When these yesteryear hacks of yesteryear were grinding out features to fill theater screens, they probably didn't know that their films would be the subjects of research, compiling their features in one of the time it takes the contemporary student to compile painstakingly detailed production notes.

The renewed interest in "bad" or "camp" films flourished in the late Seventies and early Eighties, not due to the obscure nature of these films' appeal, but rather in reaction to what then constituted a "good" film. It makes infinitely more sense to watch *Reel*

Monster (1953) eight or nine times than to view *Reiner vs. Reiner* (1978) more than once.

Some attempt to place social significance on these films. *Plan Nine From Outer Space* (1959) is a thinly veiled disguised anti-nuclear parable; blah, blah, blah. "Hidden messages." See the stoned teenager playing his heavy metal records backwards for directions from Satan, are there for those who want them. A picture such as *A Dry White Season* (1980) with its major studio backing and name stars may say something about apartheid in South Africa. It can be argued that a third tier of software that produced in South Africa, *Snake-Dancer* (1978), where the setting resembles Las Vegas, crossed with lady tale villages, the lowliest shop chef drives a Mercedes, disco jumps starts with white veils are played, and the only black person we see is a raggedy, over smiling street-side flower vendor — says as much more.

Still, a few worthwhile films escape the modern horror film scholar's pen. Some of these pictures have received attention, but only in passing. To the uninitiated, there is no difference between a *Final Exam* (1981, made-for-television) and *Slipsway Camp* (1980, box-set cross breeding of John Waters with body count film as filtered through the sensibility of a jaunted pervers). In spotlighting these films, we run the risk of showing qualities that just may not be there. Film criticism is a subjective kind of thing, independent of any set patterns. We present this gallery for the

viewer's enjoyment. There are no "classics," per se, and for the genre's sake let's not hope our standards drop to the point where we regard them as such.

We make no claims about the following other than they stood out from the rest.

DRONING, CHEAP SYNTHESIZERS OF DOOM

The Redeemer (1977) is a striking example, yielding size and effect and levels of ease and complexity on its first or fourth viewing. The largely negative critical reputation of the film (read: outly dismiss it as "unredeemable") makes the mark.

Characterized by a droning, cheap synthesizer score (only inspired by Jerry Goldsmith's *Academy Award-winning* work for *The Green* (1976), *The Redeemer* begins with a beautifully composed shot of a country lake as a cloud passes over the sun. The placid surface of the lake is broken by the hand of a little boy, who walks fully dressed to the shore. The princess type notices a note with a dust headed towards a cliff.

The *Redeemer* cuts abruptly to a sleeping figure on a cot. A hand later revealed to be the little boy's, is shown with an extra appendage (hand) moving over the figure on the cot. The sleeping figure grows an identical extra appendage. What's going on?

Out to a disguised man killing the copped undertaker of a deserted high school. The little boy is seen preparing for church school. Services begin and a father preacher (T. G. Penabazco, the masked killer and "redeemer" of the film) launches into a sermon on the shore of the fresh incense with the later casting a death mask from the ministered justice.

The viewer, now confused on how all these disparate elements are going to mesh together, is now introduced to the film's ensemble "protagonists." The characters we don't meet using the occassion. The budget too low for the seven-deadly sins the preacher launches out at its members of a high school graduating class, all typifying human failings: a grasping lawyer, a pretentious feminist, a lesbian, a voracious feminist, a convicted actor and a divorced glutton. Each character is given a limbo acted vignette to introduce them to the audience so that we may "hide" them. The six are invited to a high school reunion at the abandoned high school, where they quickly learn that they are the only attendees, cannot escape and are at the mercy of a disguised killer.

The *Redeemer* begins into a body count mode from here on in, but with a marked difference. The killer, "The Redeemer," is not your run-of-the-mill lawless killing machine. Wily, verbal, and always entertaining, he dons a different disguise for each

murder: a fuck-butter for the feminist, a murderous clown for the lesbian, a spoiled neoprene villain for the actor and a lawyer for the lawyer. A life sized distorted Huckleberry Finn doll with a flame thrower and machine guns in the fan.

After dispatching the six, we return to the preacher who we now recognize as the killer. There are a few more surrealistic episodes involving the boy before he returns to the lake, ending the film.

The fact that the *Redeemer* kills people who have character faults is a salient point in the production, to save the Redeemer's wrath, you don't have to be part of some clandestine, long-range murder or the perpetrators of words like in the *Jargon* or *Malicious* movies. You just have to be annoying. We don't know why the Redeemer has singled the five/females (as out) it's hinted that he's a former classmate, but he looks considerably older. Never revealed is the role of the little boy who gives the killer his extra digit, enabling him with supernatural powers to be from Satan (a subtext to the film, further capitalizing on *The Green* title. *The Redeemer* as "Son of Satan"? Or from the man upstairs instead with extra fingers designed for his WIT for that matter, how many other conscienceless serial killers claim to be on a holy mission from God?

Director Consuegra & Gauthier is to be commended for striving for a more complex than usual narrative style, both atmospheric photography and an overwhelming sense of mystery at what lies beyond the film's 84 minute running time. If *The Redeemer* makes the usually staid, unimpressive light flick, can follow from his wing chair, "But what does a ALL MIGHTY," the film, in itself, is redeemed.

LET THE CARTOON BEGIN

One of the most devastatingly horrifying films of all time was this little ten minute cartoon they used to show on educational television.

The *International Townies of America*, hosted by actress Jean Marsh and shown in syndication on public television in the mid-Seventies, boasted a wide array of foreign and domestic animated films. On occasion, the program would revolve around a theme, and one time the theme was on things monstrous.

"Some animators approach the subject of monsters with humor," said Marsh. "Although this last feature is far from humorous, in fact I remember your worst nightmares, if anything else."

The last feature in question was *Homage to Auguste*. Produced by Cocteau's assistant Zdzislaw Szpilarski, *Homage to Auguste* is the most horrifying animated film, and one of the most horrifying films ever made, period. Viewed almost a decade ago, this entry still remembers it vividly.

in hand-edged, quasi-Yellow Submarine fashion using black, brown and yellow colors exclusively. August begins with a serene figure sleeping in a sparsely furnished bedroom. The figure is awakened by a noise outside his window. Looking out, he sees hordes of jubilant city dwellers pouring out of their monotonous skyscrapers to some point outside of town. The figure falls back into total slumber.

The next day, the figure begins to metamorphose into a werewolf-like monster. He kills a bystander and devours him. Growing larger, he devours a couple walking in an alley. Growing King Kong-size, the monster goes on a rampage until he falls ill. Staggering outside of the city, the beast collapses and dies on an expanse of desert.

The next morning, we see the people pouring out of their buildings as we saw at the beginning of the film. They dream over the carcass of the monster, stepping over him like a horde of hungry ants. The camera pans across the barren landscape where we see empty movie-giant staircases from previous movies, ending with the leader of people flock a giant cathedral constructed from out of one of the desert's abacuses, sending out unholy prayers for the next beast.

Words cannot describe the gut-bucket effect this cartoon has. Every aspect — color, music, animation and art utilized — is intended to direct a frantic charge to the viewer's skull. In ten (not minutes, *Monty August* tells more about the relation society has towards its monsters than the entire *Chiller Theater* catalog combined. It is a good thing it is only ten minutes long. At thirty minutes, *Monty August* might very well have led to a mass suicide in L.A. Jonedown. Definitely a retail little reward to those dumb-as-fuck enough to investigate the benefits of public-supported television.

When I am asked what the most horrifying film I've ever seen is, I reply immediately "*Monty August*." Not many people know about it. Now you know.

U CAN'T TOUCH THIS

There is a sub-genre of horror film we shall call *Hot and Throaty*, sex and death. Sexually coupled with mortality, where your next bite may be your last. *Ukase* see.

The vampire film is full of such perorations: Lestat's vampire bite such as *The Vampire Lestat* (1972) to the smoozy *The Hunger* (1982) makes the male heterosexual horror fan prurvy to the obscure activities of a promiscuous kind of creature. Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987) has a strong sadomasochistic subtext. Certainly the appalling content of *Greasywolf's Dead Ringers* (1984) and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1985) and *Wild at Heart*

(1986) are made a bit more palatable with their scenes of arousing (if unusual) ecstacy.

Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1988) blurs the distinction between sex, food and death in painterly tableaux that combine all three. Bogus snuff videos that combine sex with mutilation are passed between the dining hands of those who really desire it. One wonders where the ultimate combination of perversity and lip-smacking dreams took place.

In actuality, it took place in a film town's major studio at the hands of a budding director-star in the early Seventies. Paul Bartel's *Private Parts* (1972) is a scabrously subliminal debut, that in terms of late-pun terms has no equal.

Released by Metro Goldwyn Mayer, either in a sleep of reason or at the wifings of an equally perverse studio head (as the story is told), *Private Parts* never played widely due to its suggestive title (known variously as *Private Arts* and *Private Party* and dumped with nude cheerleader pix) and unavailible services, it is up to the connoisseur to seek it out by any means necessary. Those who do are amply rewarded.

Ann Ruyten plays Cheryl, an innocent well-studied in Los Angeles who must play with her dotty aunt in the King Edward Hotel, a once stately lodge now presiding over a collection of misdeed mad houses. Leather-clad priests, wives and degenerates are the Edward's clientele, and in time the innocent Cheryl succumbs to the hotel's abuse by indulging her new found friends with acts of exhibitionism and voyeurism. She strikes up a budding romance with a handsome police photographer by donning scanty undergarments and allowing him to gaze at her through periscopes in the hotel's walls.



films when "I gonna tell on you" is his favorite phrase as he wanders in and out of the hell chain of events. Working as an audience surrogate, Aubrey more than holds. Portrait of a Serial Killer (1999) harvests some the ugly truth that There Are People Like That Out There.

Both Penelope and Patrick pay in and out of the sack with anyone and everyone in a series of vignettes. The men wear floppy hats, the soundtrack sounds as if someone has turned guitar feedback ("wwwawawawaw wwwawawawwwwwww") and subplots involving bluer gangs so tough they let pacifist preachers cover the head with chains and exit at random. The film reaches an epiphany of sorts when naughty (but Penelope catches) cheer-out Gentry in congress with gay folk leader Shit at a clart bake. Seeing Gentry's freckle with acid, Penelope causes Gentry to die in a motorcycle crash. As punishment for bringing her freedom to the camera at every opportunity and being partially responsible for his lover's death, the enraged Shit performs a radical massacre on Penelope with a buck knife. Heavy.

The video's box art, a child's chalk drawing of a preppy boy crawling through a motel plate glass window while a Harley with his Puma-Foxglove catlike garland should be enough to make this regime viewing to Those in the Know. As it has been stated earlier, Silence as a matter of attitude and Shiner's blood has attitude to spare. If the viewer approaches the film with the proper attitude, it will be impossible to settle for literally any other film instead. Sell or trade your 14 volume set of David Alexanders today.

TWISTED BUT TRUE

A no-budget film that developed a strong cult following when sold in a triple film package is television. Honor High and Twisted Brain (1974) gains its power from its ability to real life. The story is no great shakes, being a variation of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde in a high school setting, pre-dating the adolescent resurgence popularized by Brian DePalma's Carrie (1976). Late adolescent teenagers make a stand out in memory. Pat Card plays Vernon, an abused teenage nerd tormented by jocks and teachers. Vernon down a poison formula his father is fond of his face and asks with tears painted in to taste the score after school lets out. The film's most memorable death occurs to an elderly lady English teacher. After shredding Vernon's report with a paper cutter, a chiding instructor we all remember from our kindergarten days, the madman Vernon returns late at night to decapitate the old body with it in spite of her threats of "I'll make sure you never get to college".

You have to come from a specific point of

DAVID CARRADINE. 2000 DEATH RACE

A CROSS COUNTRY
ROAD WRECK!



background to appreciate scenes like this one.

Twisted Brain is the odd sort of film that works because it's so gosh-darned ugly. Shown up from 16 mm, the film is an experience that perfectly captures the atmosphere of a barren, stark high school. There is no decoration or attempt at art anywhere. The cast is an unprofessional bunch of uglies that all too readily conjures up memories of that desecrated four year prison sentence. The minimalist soundtrack score has all the warmth of dental drills. By chance or design, Twisted Brain is a genuine cry of teenage rage and alienation that I place ahead of Rebel Without a Cause.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

It's just as well these films languish in obscurity: these many one-time directors will not reap enormous financial rewards, remain to parody their original works, or worse yet turn their backs on their original fans. And it's just as well that these films stay the property of a small clique of fans who see things in them that aren't really there. The person who sets out to make An Important Work of Art is most certainly doomed to failure. Let the intellectualist and to lose in these unintended happy accidents instead.

It was Jimmy Stewart who told Peter Bogdanovich that those in the film business give people "pieces of time" to return to over and over again. Stewart worked with perfect invisible cables; we on this side connected with his last language with him that got lost. But the sentiments are identical.

While we all appreciate the flawed classic, it's the little special touches in the overexposed film that keep us all coming back for more. It's the small suggests we uncover that drives us on in our search for buried treasure. To my blood kin, I offer a hearty "keep on digging".

DIRECTOR'S

cut

by Chas. Balun

Chapter One from the now-sold to be published by The ChuckMoo Press and FantaCo Enterprises, Inc.

The headlights cut jagged slices out of the darkened hillside as the car careened crazily down the winding, one-lane road that led up to the cemetery. The momentary blasting of the horn sent shuddering ripples racing madly through the wooded canyon. A shudder, something right and lanky light as the car skidded on ancient oak that marked the entrance to the grounds. Trees quaked as they lost their hats on the pavement—then, a thundering metallic crunch rumbled across the head of the dead.

Smoke leaked from the crumpled head of the late model gray Volvo as it lay grazing at the base of a monstrous elm. One of the headlights was broken out and the windshield was spiderwebbed with cracks. Blood, small streams of pinkish gray and patches of wet, dark hair coiled slowly down from the shattered point of impact. The horn wailed and did not stop. Suddenly the driver's side door flew open and a man tumbled to the damp, thick grass. He rose unsteadily to his knees and rubbed his scalp, and then the things were upon him. They howled as they dug their fingers into his flesh, sparking fresh, fanned areas from the struggling figure. One of the things bit into his upper arm, sucking a warm, bubbling fountain of blood sloshing from the yawning, five-inch gash on the man's biceps. He jerked in pain as another one of them crept at her face while it clawed at his neck and shoulders. Miraculously, the man squeezed his fist and shook one of the things off just as another charged into the meaty part of his calf. Three of the creatures were still hanging from him but he maintained his balance and kept on moving.

Screams—jagged, gut-deep, relentless—split the night as the man ran more and more of them coming for him. They came from everywhere—behind him, from both the left and right and again, in front of him. Some wriggled right up and out of the wet, matted ground, fighting and clawing their way to the surface in a frenzied, desperate struggle to join the hunt. Most left pieces of themselves near their average bodies—piles of grey grass decorated with scars, shredded limbs, and unrecognizable shreds of putrescent flesh littered the landscape, especially heavy near the timberline stand.

One creature was scrambling uncoolly about on its hands—crawling crab-style—tracing a snakey, thickly coiled pile of guts and gore that led back to a fuzzy memorial topped by a stone Jesus.

The last, gutted scream of death splashed over the running man as one of them lunged, jaws snapping and grinding, right up and into his face. The black, broken teeth found his lips and he screamed. Another sank its fangs into his thigh and the man passed his pants. He was choking on his own blood and the scream caught in his throat. His leg and most of his rear were now missing.

The creature that had just swallowed part of his face came at him again, teeth gnashing and dark, thin hands clawing for his throat. The man threw a hurried yet solid punch that caught the thing full in the mouth. It bit into him again and he pushed his fist down its throat. He heard the jaw crack and felt the cold, slimy mush in his fist as the thing jugged and flailed madly. He put his weight behind him this time and shoved hard. His forearm disappeared and he was up to his elbow in a frothing, swelled mass that began pouring out of the thing's nose, mouth and ears. A deep wet sucking

blotch popped his arm as he forcibly withdrew his arm from the crushed leather covers. His hand lolled croakily off to one side as the thing went down, head. He smashed the rest of its face in with a well-placed mule kick and then began running again. He shook the others off and headed straight for a small grove of acacia-like trees directly ahead. He saw no shadowy figures lurking within but he was still some seventy yards away and the creatures were coming from everywhere. He lowered his shoulder and continued to plow through them the best he could. Less than thirty yards to the woods some-thing exploding, short white hot with pain, legs going to rubber but still he fought on.

As he passed a towering granite memorial, two of the things leapt onto his back. He felt their teeth harrow into his left cheek and such as the warmth of his own blood washed rapidly down his shoulders and onto his chest. He belched in pain and then lost his footing. He doubled to an abrupt halt and pushed forward, grasping for branches while furiously beating at the vicious things feeding on him. He hit the ground then rolled quickly over, only to see three more of them spring at him. Then, more still, jaws twitching madly, their eyes dead in their heads. They held him down and snapped at him again and again. And still more came. He was on his back now, looking wildly when he saw the dog, wounds wound open up on his abdomen. He looked down, fearing the worst and getting it, just in time to see one of the things bite into a leaping, shivering length of intestine and then yank it right out of his gut like so much bloodied rope. The other wounds stabbed into him with increasing ferocity as the creature slowly splashed to the ground beneath him.

He raised his head up high enough to witness two of the creatures go elbow deep into his stomach cavity and then begin fighting over a snail's length of stomach gut when suddenly the night exploded. Bright, fiery orange thunderclaps erupted from the mangrove grove as he rolled his eyes towards the trees. Flaming tongues of fire leapt from the grove and then he heard the same human voices coming from the tree line.

He glanced up again just as the hideous black, dripping mass leaved onto his face to finish the job. Then, in less than a heartbeat, the blackened head bore open as a chunky mass of bone and brains that splashed his face and filled his upper mouth with a moist, crackly gravel. The things momentarily stopped feeding long enough to look towards the grove as more and more fire flew the treacherous flock of the creatures.

One stared incomprehendingly toward the gunfire, flesh entirely dropping from its chest, just before a high-powered blast tore a heading ball

slashed through its chest. The thing crumpled into a heap atop the downed man, its fingers and jaws still twitching furiously. Another flurry of explosions followed before he heard voices again, louder now, and much closer.

The men, in both camouflage and fatigues, gathered around him and poured down at his mangled body as he tried to raise his arm in signal. Nothing budged. He tried again to move an arm, a hand, even, but they were both gone. He couldn't move anything. He couldn't even blink his eyes.

"There not one of them," said a blue-jacketed man holding a smoking M-16 in his arms.

The man on the ground tried to acknowledge him but blood filled his mouth and choked off the reply.

"He shouldn't be anywhere near this place. How do you figure he managed to get through the mainblock?" said another man cradling a man-made steel pump action shotgun.

"Doesn't matter now, does it?" said the small one with the pistol.

"Yeah," replied Mr. Blue-Jacket.

The taller man groaned deeply as his eyes rolled back in their sockets. A second rough laugh in his throat before it turned into a whining rattle that shook his body one last time.

The men looked up, impassively and gazed blank-faced at one another.

Then suddenly...the figures disappeared, replaced by glowing, jagged stars.

Raymond Tyler set his bottle of Black Velvet aside and pushed the "spot" button on his WCR.

"That's not how I would have done it," he said to no one in particular. "Not at all."

He gingerly removed the spent cassette and slid his well-worn copy of *Border Dawn* back into its box.

"You're OK, Rollins," he said, flipping the bold faced director's credit at the bottom of the box. "But you're losing a Real guy don't look anything like that rubber shit you're using."

Tyler replaced the cassette on the shelf and reached the another. Then there was no a black box right above his copy of *Cannibal Manoeuvre*. He pulled it out and gently traced a pattern along the hand-drawn label. It read *Reverend Karl 61*.

"Now you'll see how it's done," he cracked as he slid the cassette into the machine. "You were good...in your day, Rollins, but it's time for the new blood." Tyler growled as he grabbed his bottle. He extended a thick stubby finger and hit "play." He took another pull from the bottle, leaning his head way back as the last of the red-colored fluid purged itself his throat.

"That's the way it really looks," he laughed.

The enemy, flopping perform slumped back and revealed a hand-held glass shot of a bespectacled young man cowering in fear. A dark, blurry object was seen crashing down upon his head. Tyler squealed as the clear hammer smashed into the guy's face.

"Now there's an effect that's really special," he chuckled.

Several deep holes had been punched into the man's skull and he was screaming and crying at full-throttle. Blood bubbled up from the ragged wound and covered his head in a red sticky mass. Tyler was mesmerized. Then the action dropped out of the frame. The picture blinked a few times, went away again for a few seconds, then cleared.

A clear shot of the bloodied head filled the screen, the face shown from an overhead angle.

"Now comes the good part," Tyler giggled as he dove himself even closer to the set. He licked his lips and extended a finger to the TV.

The red-ribbed face bawled as the claws of the hammer sank into the eye socket, splintering the skull and popping the eyeball like an overripe grape. Then, lowered against the nasal bone, the hammer slammed downward and a path the size of a fist blossomed suddenly on the right side of the ruined face.

Tyler was clucking the whiskey bottle tightly with both hands as he watched the hammer come down again and again and again. The picture went dark. Then sizzle and sizzle. He bent forward and switched it off.

"Now that's the ticket," he grinned. "I think there's a lesson here somewhere."

Tyler rubbed both hands together then slapped his lips with his right fist.

"I'll show those Hollywood jackoffs a thing or two," he boasted. "Show 'em all how it's really done - right."

Tyler stood up and reached for his jacket. He pulled it on and then poked up his recorder from the chair. Moving over to the bureau, he spared the second drawer and withdrew a thing about that he quickly hid in his coat.

"And that time," he boasted, "they're going to listen."

Jeff Rollins took a deep, long howling pull on the proffered joint.

"Thanks dude. From Humboldt," said the straggler, red-haired woman sitting in his right. Rollins nodded and took another hit. He exhaled slowly through his nose, delightfully covering the sweet, herbaceous bite of the prime, \$450 cigarette stash. Rollins reached for his glass of Appleton Dark and ran his tongue over his parched lips.

"Tucker."

The woman giggled. Rollins drained his glass, then quickly refilled it. He looked at his watch and sighed.

"Aren't we awfully early?"

A neatly bearded young man in a flamboyantly-geared leather jacket turned around and addressed them at the rear of the van as the driver made a right turn on La Brea.

"They'd like you to sign a few posters and make publicity shots for the Academy before you speak to the members," said Paul Frandson, the last producer of Rollins' last three films, including *Smile, Please*, their biggest hit to date.

"These people have been among our staunchest supporters in the past. Let's not forget that."

Rollins made a luring noise with his cheeks and reached into his pocket for the cash clip.

"Bantha warblers, collie dogs and rump potatoes... some in desperate need of marketing," replied Billy K. aka driver. Billy, a long-haired, lanky motormouth, was one of Rollins' production assistants and a part-time dope dealer in the state. "These whorly-assed yuppie wannabes haven't seen a real horror film since they blew back at *The Exorcist*. Show the real lame cats."

"Maybe so," muttered Frandson, "but we've got a packed house for tonight's screening and plenty of European buyers have expressed interest in attending. They're damn hungry for something like this for a long, long time."

Rollins, contented in a thick blue cloud of Class A haze, looked up and offered a crooked smile.

"We've profiled up about 100 survey cards," continued Frandson, "and if we get anywhere near the numbers we got in New York, we'll then, come around here is about to be booked."

Both Billy K. and the woman nodded enthusiastically.

"If everything goes according to plan, then BDI and Lauren Daniels are going to be at each other's throats for the North American rights - not to mention the video and video pan." Frandson smacked his lips and took another hit off the newly ignited reefe.

"And the fans are going to eat it up big-time," Frandson added. "The special effects are above and beyond anything they've ever seen in a splatter movie." He took in another lungful of the sweet smoke.

"Tucker's mother been really good to me."

Frandson put his hands behind his head and relaxed slowly.

"Erred from the dead," he grinned.

Billy K. purchased a button on the cassette player. Howler. The wrong walk with pedal wire to

Verden Chale. Slight Return walked through the smoke-filled van. Millers fell right onto the ground.

"And, Jeff" bawled Franden, "this is the first time we've ever let them see your director's not right!"

Edline nodded.

"Thank they can handle it." added Franden.

Edline sat up straight and winked.

"It's the Ultimate Chuckblower," the director rapped. "Pure, one hundred percent Butcher's Trade beef. Every conscientious, dues paying member will be coming in their droves by the second reel. Hallelujah! Now I can die happy and rich, too."

As the van turned the corner at Highland Avenue and made its way to the VIP parking lot of the Director's Guild Theater, no one took notice of the muscular, long-haired kid leaning against the box office window. When the van passed him, the kid stood erect, clicked his heels together and saluted smartly.

"The new blood," said Raymond Tyler as the girl in the booth handed him the ticket.

M A N

M Y T H

A N D

M A N I A C



An Interview with WILLIAM LUSTIG

by Kris Gilpin



Quitting in Kino
but returning in Horror

After working crew jobs on hard-core porn flicks at the ripe young age of 17, [C] Lustig directed two of the best XXX-rated spics before making *Maniac* with Joe Spinell in 1980: it was a horror film as depicted it even passed off many genre fans. Next came the suspense tale, *Wizards*, followed by *Maniac Cop*, (which Lustig directed from a script by Larry [C], *It's Alive*) Cohen), *Hill Unit* and *Maniac Cop II*.

KG: First off, how'd you come to meet and make a film with Larry Cohen?

WL: Well, Larry and I have known each other for several years; we met through a mutual friend at a film info in New York. It was in February of 1987 when we came up with the idea of *Maniac* over lunch in New York City.

KG: What was it like to work with Cohen?

WL: Well, since he'd written the

"I knew Aronson pretty well...I was involved with the opening sequence of his *Tenebris*."

screenplay I was basically on my own at that point. It was really a pleasure working with him; he came in during post-production and offered some very valuable suggestions on some of the editing choices and such in the film. It was mainly on the screenplay and in post-production that we worked together.

KG: Were you a fan of his work?

WL: Oh, yeah, very much. I loved *It's Alive*, *Danger on Old Told Me*, *Te Sencral Effects*. I think Larry Cohen is an incredible filmmaker and a very interesting personality. An extremely bright guy, one of the smartest people I've ever met in the business.

KG: Would you like to work with him again?

WL: As a matter of fact, we're talking about doing another picture together. He was really happy about the way *Maniac* turned out. Larry's usually been an entrepreneur; this

was the first time he'd done a project with a partner, let alone a partner who directed the picture. He probably felt a bit uncomfortable about that, so that's why he stayed away during the production. He figured it'd be like two chicks in the kitchen. But when he finally did get to see the film, according to him it exceeded his expectations. We've screened it for buyers and it's been sold throughout the world, and it's now a profitable picture, and we want to do something else [together].

KG: How about Bruce [The Evil Dead II & III] Campbell?

WL: He's great. He's going to work with me. He does his work well, he's very well prepared when he comes to the set and he's a lot of fun. The crew loved him. He's a total pro, and I think *Maniac Cop* was a bit more demanding to him in terms of his acting ability because there's a lot more dialogue and character

than in the *Evil Dead* films, which were more physical. Our film had physical stuff in it, but it was mainly a lot more interacting with other actors, and he handled himself great. He was so eager to doing his own stunts. He gave stunt doubles for him for just about everything and he'd keep saying, "Oh, I can do that." He was surprised whenever anybody got a stunt double for him and with some of the things. I think he was thankful for it [chuckles]. And he always had suggestions for his character. We were collaborating all along, he was the first person I hired on the film. He's a

"I think the horror films which tend to endear the audience to them the most are a bit more rough around the edges, like the *Evil Dead* films — the sort of *Bad Boy* movies."

very amusing guy, but we were working so hard there really wasn't too much time for laughter. All told including pick up shots, we had a 25 day shoot.

KG: Do you have any anecdotes from the shoot?

WL: We were doing some very hairy stunts during the film. Most of our 'fun' was being there when someone really death-deying stuff was done. We had a guy hanging into the side of a truck going 40 miles an hour who flew into the ocean. At the same time the van turns over like a really spectacular stunt. We just had a lot of fun making the picture.

KG: Have you always been a genre fan?

WL: Oh, yeah. I was a Famous Monster of Filmland freak and was always into monster and action films. I practically grew up watching movies on 42nd Street, so I got my fill of all the horror films that I really love like the *Class of 1999* films.

KG: Do you like making horror more than action or vice-versa?

WL: Well, when you're doing action, so much depends on stunts and effects and things like that, and no matter how much time you take [these things] will take their toll from it. It's a very tedious doing action films, but I enjoy them. I don't enjoy the process of making an action film. I personally wish I didn't have to be there when it was being made because it's just so tedious.

"We decided to pool our money, which came to a big \$48,000, opened up a bank account and started a production — we called it *Mantic*."

whereas with horror, you're really dealing with a lot of dramatic moments. It's hard to explain. For instance *Mantic* is a balance between action and horror. We have the sequence in which there's a massive cop hitting people in a police station, and there's a lot of

"I'd always intended the film to be the equivalent of sitting at the dinner table, listening your food and opening your mouth before you swallow it."

suspense and action and stuff like that. I really enjoy working those scenes where all that stuff out, and visualizing it. I'm thinking about the audience while I'm writing, thinking about how to get the best scenes and what I wish for maximum impact. It's a lot of fun and a lot less tedious [than directing action], because you're able to control it more. With action because you're dealing with cars and traffic control and everything else, it just takes longer.

KG: Your first film was the hard-core genre: *The Violation of Claude*. How'd you get that as your first feature?

WL: I was working as a production assistant and an assistant editor in New York. I was a high-school drop-out, born in the Bronx and raised in New Jersey. When I was raised was right across the George Washington Bridge, so I'd always go to New York. I related to New York. At the time *Deep Throat* was very popular, so the kind of film people were making in New York was some kind of hard-core picture.

People who in New lights legitimate people [in the biz], whose names I won't mention, were making hard-core films because that was the genre. I guess, after *Under the 10th*, there was the mafia and slasher genre. I had been working on several hard-core films as a production assistant. In every position you could imagine. I knew nothing about cameras, yet here I was losing [film] magazines up. It was a great learning experience because there was a lot of hands on experience on equipment. Quite frankly, I never really thought about what we were shooting. I was thinking technically all the time. I'd shot some of *XXX-rated* films

and, in 1976, the opportunity came my way to shoot an entire feature. I'd shot a lot of second unit stuff. No hard-core but still with a lot of acting in it. I was 21 years old when I made *Violation of Claude*. It was made for just around 40 thousand dollars and it went on to make about \$2,000,000, gross. And I think we struck, all together, around 20 to 30 prints at the time. So it was a very, very profitable venture. I learned a lot, because I also took the time to foreign film markets and learned about foreign-film sales, which helped me in making my future films, since I was very comfortable dealing with the foreign marketplace.

KG: Did you try to do something with *The Violation of Claude* to differentiate it from the other current hard-core?

WL: Actually my intention was — and I don't think it was the right one — to do it "classy." Because I had a woman who wrote the script and I tried to do something... basically what I did was I ripped off *Julia Roberts' 1977* *Love de Jeop*. I believe that story lived in it. I had a lot of attention to production value, and the reviews of the picture all complimented that. I tried to think that hard-core films just like horror films, need to be a little bit perverse to be fun. Though [joked]

KG: In what way?

WL: I think the horror films which tend to anger the audience is that the most are a bit more rough around the edges, like the *First Dead Thing* — the sort of *Bad Boy* movies. I think those films should be a bit more like *Forbidden Fruit*. I don't do that with *Candy* and, I respect. I think that was a mistake. A distributor once told to me in my branch, "If you ever come across something which truly disgusts and bothers you, and you're allowed to shoot it because your mother might see it, shoot it."

KG: What led you into the horror of *Mantic*?

WL: Well, I'd always wanted to

make a horror film even when I was doing *Wrestler* in Canada. I was a fan of David Chassidov *Massacre* and *Last House on the Left*. In fact I'd met Sam Cunningham and Wes Craven in New York back then and I'd met the actor Joe Spinell while I was making *Cléopâtre*. He was coming out in *Rocky* and was a very pretentious character actor. He was a fan of genre films and we started hanging out together seeing movies on 42nd Street, eating Chinese food and talking. We'd have a great time and we wanted to make a movie together. We came up with an idea based on a father and son team who went around New Jersey killing women — a true story. The father would pretend by seduce the son to rape and kill the women. I was really diverted. So we had this idea of doing a sort of *Honeymoon* *Poltergeist*-type movie, and we wrote a screenplay called *Steynde*. I don't even know what the script is today. We went around to everybody but we couldn't raise the money [to make it]. Finally, then I did *Hot Money*. Joe had made some money from *Gulag* and a very close friend of mine at the time, Andrew Gurnoff, was doing the New York sequences for *Dario Argento's* *Inferno*. We decided to pool our money, which came to a big \$48,000, opened up a bank account and started a production. We called it *Idemac*. What Joe and I did was came up with a compilation of personalities based on all these serial killers, then I came up with all these murder sequences. I'd wanted to put into a picture. We took those to a writer who wrote a screenplay with us, which I think we never even looked at while we shot the movie [chuckles] because it was a traditional horror screenplay with police [and so forth]. We went out and basically reworked the movie as we were doing. I knew the murder sequences. Joe knew the character, so it was basically

debated between killing and Joe killing and Joe. There was really not too much more [to it]. Total cash to post production on that film was \$135,000 and the film in this country has done five and a half million dollars, and overseas it's done equal that if not more. The film just made a bundle and all of a sudden, I became "legitimate". I started getting offers from studios to do pictures and stuff like that. RG *Idemac* passed a lot of people off. How do you respond to the cries of misogyny?

WL: At first I kind of feared it. I was using a lot of women getting all the attention for someone who'd never gotten any before was a lot of fun. Multiple two. I'd always intended the film to be the equivalent of sitting at a dinner table, chewing your food and opening your mouth before you swallow. It's always thought of it as a big joke to sort of upset people [chuckles] but what happened was that all of a sudden people started to really give the film a lot more importance than I thought it deserved. I expected people to be outraged at all the violence, but I didn't expect the film to take on all these political things that happened with it. I started getting these mail all kinds of nasty things were sent to the film's lobby and to me. I came out here for the opening and there were people picking the theatre. I really thought it was unbelievable. I stopped being amused by it. I never took the film seriously when I made it. I'd always had an enormous antipathy towards it. I thought "How can anyone take this seriously? It's so stupid. The guy's going around raping people. The violence is it was so outrageous. It was ridiculous, and I always viewed it that way. I started to get kind of sad because I saw people who were taking everyday violence around them and trying to find very symbolic answers to what's all about. I found it very sad that people would take very complicated

problems and get them on movies like *Idemac* and *Friday* [in 1985 and before and records]. I like to become. In a sense, kind of "politically aware" I'd be on these talk shows with these women against [the film]. I had the one woman out here [performing the film], Jean or Jeanne [something] and two years later she's arrested. She was involved with an actual murder. She was an accomplice to an actual murder. All I did was sit there with Tom Savini and spitter "blood" on people. It taught me a lot about hypocrisy — that there's a lot of it. I grew out of that experience.

RG: So there wasn't any intentional hatred of women slain in the storyline?

WL: What happened was that after we wrote the first draft I said I wanted the best special-effects guy around. I'd seen *Queen of the Dead* and I'd tipped over the carters. Tom Savini was in New Jersey shooting *Friday* the 13th. I gave him a call. He was going to come to New York to live for a little while so we flew him up there, put him up in an apartment and he became our best buddy. And we set around my apartment-office in New York and over there and Chinese food came up with the most outrageous things we could think of to put in the movie. And we were laughing all the time we were doing it, as if no one would take this stuff seriously. It was a lot of fun, a lot of brainstorming. It was a gas. We were laughing as we were making the film, splashing blood all over the place. We thought it was hysterical. Tom was extremely efficient, moving fast very little experience with make-up effects, I was expecting them to take a lot longer than they did, and I don't remember very well, and he did a first-rate job. He was energetic, enthusiastic and always adding more stuff to the show. The only thing which happened with Tom, which was funny, was that after the film started getting blasted

off of a sudden he started to change his tune about the movie. He started to, all of a sudden, call it trash and here was a guy who, after we watched the movie, put his arms around me and told me how much he loved it. I never to this day understood why Tom did that.

KQ: Have you any involvement in the proposed *Maniac 2*?

WL: I really didn't know what the hell to do for a *Maniac 2*. That's [my] number one [worry] — what could I do in the first film that I could do in the second? Obviously somebody's come up with the answer and they came to me. Joe and Andy [Garnon] and they bought the script rights to the film from us. Again, I couldn't do it for money, but I haven't a long time ago not to do things for money. Skip back here to see if you can find out why to do it other than just for a paycheck. And I really couldn't find a reason to do a *Maniac 2* other than to make a paycheck out of it. I mean, maybe they'll come up with a script and it'll be wonderful and they'll want me to direct it. I just don't know. Joe was the star of the movie. You can't have a *Maniac* without him. But I've had very little involvement with *Maniac 2*.

KQ: Have you always been a fan-of-gore film?

WL: You know a lot of horror and gore films, but when you say "hor"

I'm not really a fan of the Herschell Gordon Lewis films. I'm more a fan of the films of Dario Argento, Sam Peckinpah, George Romero and Cronenberg. A lot of people sort of enjoy revelling in macabre films but I don't. I enjoy seeing a quality film, like *Painted Chaise longue*.

KQ: If you made *Maniac* again today would you do it any differently?

WL: [Answers immediately] I'd put more humor into it. Although we weren't mean spirited when we made it. It retrospect looking at it today I think the film is too mean-spirited.

KQ: And that's what pissed people

off?

WL: Maybe it did. I looked at it [recently] and I didn't see any humor in it and I think it needed it, because what we were thinking was that up on the screen.

KQ: Have you ever planned to make a movie with Dario Argento?

WL: We were going to do one together but it just haven't come together. I had a project he liked. I was going to shoot it in Rome and New York. But for reasons I don't even remember it just never came together. I haven't spoken with him in at least three years. Sam Raimi's a friend who I speak to once a month. He has a very big role in *Maniac*. He was a hell to work with. He's a great guy. I know Argento pretty well. We'd spent a lot of time together in Rome and New York. I was also involved with the opening sequence of his *Jeune femme*, which is called *Jeune femme*. I did New York service work for the opening scene. It was very cool about three minutes of screen time. I haven't been there for a while but the first time I'm in Rome, I'm going to give him a call. I'm dying to see [Argento's latest film] *Opera*. The guy is a technical master. I enjoy his movies because I get a lot of ideas when I watch them.

KQ: Where would you like to star your career back here?

WL: Well, my first stop — when I got my XXX rated film — was to learn my craft. My next step was to get involved with making independent pictures and handling the financing and all the rest of it. Now I'm getting pictures with other people's money and for my next step I'd like to do movies with [big] stars in them and to like to have more title to shield my movies. The common denominator on most of the pictures I've done is that there's just never enough money. And many times, if you have stars in your film it gives you the budget and ability to spend more time doing things which sometimes you're not able to give the proper amount of time to. With these two

"I found it very sad that people would take very complicated problems and put them on movies like *Maniac* and *Friday the 13th* and *Twelve Angry Men*."

action projects, I have budgets in the five to six million dollar range in mind. Whether or not I'm able to go up to that level I'll soon see. But that's my goal right now. I've proven myself and my films have been successful. *MS* that was bought by Warner Bros. for overseas distribution and RCA Columbia has a lot more video in the country. So now I'd like to move up a level, to try to grow a little bit and get into bigger films. And the major common denominator in my films is that I try to make them visceral pictures where they get you. I try to create a sustained suspense throughout.

**A FRENZY OF
BLOOD!**



**THE
BLOOD
SPATTERED
BRIDE**

EASTMANCOLOR

R RESTRICTED

THE BLOODSPATTERED BRIDE

THE LESBIAN VAMPIRE AS REVOLUTIONARY

"The good are content to dream what the wicked actually practice."

Plato

by Steven R. Johnson

The *Bloodspattered Bride* was one of the most masculinized of the so-called "spate" of lesbian vampire films, which also included the likes of Joseph Lerner's *Vampires* and Stephen Rothenberg's *The Velvet Vampire*. Though often compared to Vidor's *Blood and Roses* and Hammer's *The Vampire Lovers* because of its focus on *J. Sheridan* in French Camille, the film more rightly competes to Harry Hamlin's 1971 film, *Daughters of Darkness*, both movies involving the brides of seductive husbands who are driven to murderous relationships with charismatic women vampires. *Bride*, while obviously inspired by Kurosawa's film, goes beyond that film's crowd-pleasing and adds an acute interest (shared as did many other Spanish films of the time) in the wider political climate of its native Spain under the Franco dictatorship. Much maligned and underappreciated in most genre texts (though gaining a reputation), it's time to take a second look at this important work by director Vicente Aranda.

Produced in 1978 by Aranda's own Morgana Films (named for his 1966 feature, *Fata Morgana*), and opening right off the bat that what we think we're seeing may be an unusual *Bride*

presents a constantly conflicting dialogue between two character's fantasies, never giving us a clear perspective on anything. The method is perplexing yet never without its logic, and provides an argument to those who accused the film as a weak treatise on the threat of lesbianism, for what may come off as the filmmakers' own marginal attitudes often turns out to be the unbridled or personal fantasy of a character of highly questionable motivations. The reality, which is clearly superior, and the editing, which sometimes seems to have been done with a towel, even a source of some criticism as well, though they too, have their function — mainly in throwing off Franco's censor from the film's highly volatile references of his regime (one which did not take kindly to such uprisings).

The story begins with a pair of newweds arriving at their hotel, where the bride, Susan, notices a mysterious woman in a red car and black cloak watching her. Up in their room she experiences a masochistic fantasy involving a man who resembles her husband, and insists that they leave. They move to the husband's huge estate, where Susan endures his abusive behavior while apparently sustaining satisfaction by the

woman. In one of these dreams, the woman passes a dagger on to her, which she later transfers to her husband. While concealing the weapon in a beach, he discovers someone buried in the sand who resembles the figure in his wife's dreams and who may be the reincarnation of a woman who killed her ancestor on their wedding night a century before. He takes her back to the house, where the woman, Carmela, develops a bond with Susan which turns vampiric and sexual, eventually pushing her on to the murders of a doctor and the grandmother and to attempts on the husband's life. Finding the two asleep in the coffin Carmela has been using as a resting place, the husband shoots it till it gushes blood, then kills the pubescent daughter of the grandmother. A headline appears on screen, **HOUSE NEWS MAN CUTS OUT THE HEARTS OF THREE WOMEN**.

Given these circumstances, it's easy to married the film, especially as Aranda achieves most of the technical artistry which might suggest a more refined polished sensibility. Much feminist criticism would also seem to argue David's portrait of its lesbian character, as the depiction of her here is true to the predatory archetype which usually casts her as a threat to the husband of our dreams of ambivalent identification. The error in applying such readings to the film lies, however, in mistaking one character's point of view for the director's, and in a failure to fully appreciate the barbarism and cruelty of the husband himself, whose fantasies frequently suggest themselves in the action of the film. Such episodes as her leaving open Susan's hotel gown, biting her by the hair, smothering her in the swamp, intruding on her moment fun with Carol, a secret gift, in the cellar, and subsequently carrying an ancestor's head before her wife's very eyes, all indicate someone few rational viewers would want to identify with and support. And if male audience members are encouraged to side with him, female viewers as well could derive satisfaction from her reticence, serving to balance the conflict, if nothing else. The number of shots from behind her—her reds, her headwards, footwards, and down, suggest both what we might imagine acting counteractively, unconsciously, and finally destructively, the most striking demonstration of this being a shot appearing toward the end of the film in which the husband touches a bloody dagger to the bloodied teeth of a trap, uniting the madwoman phallus with the vagina dentata. The film further balances the masculine and the feminine in its accumulation of deceptively subtle reconfigurations of scenes, each one with a twist (usually a switch of the genders initially assigned) that puts

the viewer off guard and constantly questions and revises their dialectic.

At one point, the husband illustrates for Susan the difference between reality and dreams, in shades of light and dark in the mirror of one of her shades:

There is dream (dark), and here is reality (light). When a person is asleep, the line separating them is imprecise: when the person is awake, the line becomes as thick as stone wall. They cannot and must not mingle.

Yet the line between our own apprehension of reality and dream is blurred by Aranda's thwarting of conventional expectations, for the film's leaps from one to the other are seamless. When the nightmare man in black springs from the closet to attack Susan, there aren't any fancy wipes or dissolves, it just happens, when the husband steps up Carmela on the beach, the scene is played totally straight, the obviously artificial hand protruding from the sand a footnote to another film essay on fantasy and reality, Maya Deren's *Motion of the Afternoon*, finally, when the husband sleeps through a howling by Susan and later finds Carmela and her with others in their coffin after a talking scene, we are no longer certain where reality left off and the fantasies even began. Both "attacks" on Susan and all of Carmela's early appearances take place in bright light, first in the upstairs and later with the bedroom lights full on, Susan's eyes wide open. This is either to imply that what's taking place is, according to the husband's observation, reality (even if it occurs in the light), or that, for these women, the principles of light and darkness are a reversal of his own (as in their sensuality, growing maternal nature, and, for the allegedly "mad" Carmela, very state of being).

Whether Carmela is real or fantastic, living or dead, human or vampire, is never made explicit. The doctor who administers to Susan after her attack insists that Carmela is both and blood, but he's off base on other matters, and may be so on this one, as well. Her explanation of how she wound up naked and buried in the sand, Susan's words, when she was stolen during and "lost track of time," she says — best thing she knew, the husband was digging her up, but is accepted by everyone. About all we know is that, metaphorically, the husband's sexual violence (as symbolized by the phallic dagger) is responsible for the production of this, in turn, sexual revenge.

When the husband returns home from the seashore with Carmela, the scene is that

from the same perspective as his arrival at the hotel (and even after at the house) in the beginning of the film, his looking for the servants tying the scenes together, it's at this point that the many recapitulations of scenes, imagery, and dialogue kick in, reinforcing the feeling of starting and restarting. Even though the husband appears to represent order and logic, certain things, such as the uncertainty as to Carmela's physical existence, and the obvious wish fulfillment fantasy of the ending (Carmela and Susan somehow sensationally remain asleep — asleep, of course — while the husband sits about their destruction, just as the girl Carol willingly submits to her two husbands) indicate that we haven't necessarily entered a verifiable reality. The continuing currency of events implies, instead, that we have rather gone from Susan's fantasy of violation and rebirth, into her husband's fantasy of threat to and reassertion of his dominion.

It's also worth noting the similarity between a shot in Aranda's film and a scene in the original *Cat People*, in which the sexually-repressed Irene (Simone Simon) claws the back of a couch in frustration: this is recalled in Arado when Susan claws the surface of a desk-top with a set of inverted rings as the men go to the dagger her husband has hidden within. That film's four-voice vocal rhythm with Mark and Ardo also in the distance. There's a sense of turning into a murderous predator if aroused... with the suggestion that this animal might actually be the agent of her psychic rebirth/renewal. (The relation between the two earlier films wasn't lost on Curtis Harrington, either, whose first commercial feature, *Night Tide*, paid homage to both.)

Beyond this psychosexual subtext, however, Aranda's references to the husband's family and society suggest a larger, cultural perspective as well, the repression of the feminine in the husband suggesting the oppression of all women by the patriarchal society he represents. The quivering feeling of the ending — the sudden freeze-frame stilling on the image of the dagger-point — Carmela's breast (the only sexual effect in a movie told entirely in shocking trade-jump cuts) — is attended to later on, bringing this to a little as note a resolution of the failure of machismo in this macho society.

Even farther beyond this cultural dimension is the deeper, political reading the film demands, however. Coming to the last point of the Franco regime, Arado ultimately acts as a commentary on the absurdity of a macho and not coincidentally, repressive government, trying to stifle the larger spirit of, more than just a

subculture or gender, an entire people. That Aranda should have chosen a violent, explosive genre format such as this to diagnose his inflammatory viewpoint is no wonder, given the censorship under which Spanish filmmakers worked at the time, and also Hapsell describes in her collaborative book on Spanish cinema under Franco, *Out of the Fire* (London: BFI Books, 1986). In it, he refers to the problem and to certain measures ("censor-coding techniques best described as a return to diffusion", p. 89) taken by Aranda's contemporaries, directors who used the formal and theoretical elements of their trade to comply or clothe for Franco's brutal regime to pick up on to render their political allegories.

The picture Aranda draws, then, of Francoist rule, is hardly a flattering one.

The Spanish Civil War was a clash between Loyalists defending the newly-elected Republican government, and Nationalist rebels led by Franco, who stood for the established landowners, military, aristocracy, and the Catholic Church. Afterward, the General presided over an array of quasi-fascist cabinets for 36 years, and many who disagreed with his policies were either imprisoned, killed, or put to death. Franco himself is frequently characterized as an selfish, patriarchal, reactionary though well-meaning dictator, fond of hunting (a popular metaphor for filmmakers, according to Hapsell, for its "political connotations as the favorite sport-run slaughter of Franco and his ministers", p. 17) and other macho vices.

It's not too far a leap, then, to associate the husband in Arado with this man, or to associate his estate with the state, suggesting Susan as representative of the Spanish people as a whole. Marriage, given the attitude Aranda displays toward how the sexes relate, may be analogous to civil war and the figure of Carmela given to represent the spirit of revolution itself, especially as implied by Carol's last words (preparing for her execution, she tells the husband, "They'll come back. They must die").

Also amplifying the political allegory is Aranda's constant veiling of the victims during the aforementioned violations or "unspeakable" acts when the stranger emerges from the hotel about to rape Susan, he wraps her wedding veil around her face, the veils also suggesting the subjugation of women through marriage. Similarly, Susan's face is veiled by her own hair in the cemetery, as it is in the chapel with Carmela, Carol also drapes her hair over her face as her own execution. This suggests a blinding of the people — even by their own hand, at times — to

These violent actions, a maintenance of secrecy or ignorance of which the aforementioned conspiracy may be an example. It's also analogous to the removal of the face in Marzullo's portrait in its obscuring of identity, whether that identity be the oppressor's, as in the husband's stockinged animal, the victim's, or the revolutionary's. Significantly, *Senso* is immediately related after his visitations from Gerardo, a further suggestion of the blinding or numbing of systems to quell (smothering rebellious sentiment.) Considered in that light, then, the film becomes an allegory of the will of the people to live free from oppression, repression, and dictatorship, and the technique becomes more or less a positive form in rising up against such rule.

The film stands as an uncompromising, if inadequately related, document of the regime at its worst and of the violence of the reactionary feeling it inspired in its artists, and as a vivid portrait of the spirit of the people, once politicized, under any totalitarian rule. Despite political associations made (where Arendt's ambiguous attitude toward this one suggests he would rather "love them), the message the film sends out to all oppressors is clear: you can defame or defame the people who stand up against your inhumanity, you can deny them their identity, legitimacy, try to blind the people to your "unspendable acts," you can even cut their hearts out trying to rid yourself of the source of their resistance, but as long as you force them to live under tyranny and dictatorship there will always be a "return of the oppressed." They may be silenced or put down for as long as you live, but, unlike individual men like Francesco Ferreri, "They'll come back. They cannot die."

GORE SCOREBOARD

THE RATING SYSTEM

 **Below-average**

 **Nearly worthless**

  **Average**

   **Above average**

    **Classic, Must see**

REVIEWS BY

Chris Berman (CB) Steve Dahlman (SD) Walter Gay (WG) Greg Gindoff (GG) Paul Scharner (PS)

VIOLENT SHIT (1980)

by Andrew Scherman



This German gore bomb may cause you to reevaluate your views on the definition of the Berlin wall. And, if you were one of the unfortunate who actually purchased a copy of this atrocity, well then you're probably looking it up and asking the man, right?

This amateur backyard splatter team generated an undesired underground reputation in the wake of *Nikolaikirche* as the "last big thing" from the German gutter brigade. Oh, six guys alright, perhaps even the bloodiest film ever made, but don't take that as any sort of recommendation from these shores.

In fact, this "film" is really a shaky video, presumably shot by people attempting to watch the cinematic atrocity even in such boot-licking splatters as *Loosehead*, *Made Violence* or *Canalised Campus*. They kicked up Big Redhead that, slyly named and carefully mounted, is even as crude as these films. You may even find yourself wincing the last time *Shit* is in German, without realizing that spurring you doing so doubt just as punishing as the on-screen action.

Oh yeh, the *Shit* really starts flying when a lumbering monster attack that looks a number of

Armitage with his plywood chains (they passed either for weapons or merchandise). Here, there are trailers, listing these bits of gaudy gore as the best stuff every few minutes, but so boring what?

The filmmaking techniques employed by the *Shit* crew were primitive (see page three of the camera owner's manual) and the script master has just done as a medieval scribe after 10 or 10 *Hamlets*.

Don't be fooled by the hype you may have heard about this *Violence* (and *Violence* that makes because *Violence* that is not, Jack.

GG)

SOCIETY (1988)

by Brian Yarns



DRINE OF RE-ANIMATOR (1989)

by Brian Yarns



The uncredited addition kept up Brian Yarns a *Society* by the British genre press notes was rare parking in the wake of the recent *Shit* (which gives the name unimpaired *Shit* of the *Armitage* in recent U. R. journals. Perhaps the

The Gore Score

The GORE SCORE concerns itself with nothing but the quantity of blood, brains, guts, chest, neck, penis or other assorted precious bodily fluids spilled, slopped or splattered during the course of the film. A simple straightforward indication of just how much and nasty the movie really is.

Like this:



THINGS OF ENDEARMENT, GENTLE WILLLOW, THREE MEN AND A CRUISE



DR. BUTTERER M.D., MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY, NEROMANTIC, CANNIBAL, INDICAUNT

But that *Shit* really deals with actual persons, these consequences and the tragedy of a small but powerful minority group appears to the first frustration over mass unemployment, youth group violence, a crumbling social order and the questionable nature of the job, society (perhaps that comprises the "Royal Family" that, we thought a revolutionary war over the same group. It's not that we can't comprehend the situation, it's just that it's not a good enough reason to call *Shit* a five star drama and refer to it as "Film of the Year."

True, *Shit* was high. It's refreshingly imaginative splatters and dramatic imagery depicts the somewhat predictable death in terms of violence, thematic elements, but ultimately *Society* never really lives up to its particular death.

Like *Whitney* really played by the message says that *Shit* (which is *Shit*'s total message) a lot who appears to have everything, yet still suffers from unachieved reality, promises and a deep need for that his family and their friends have been an emergency against him. There are his friends are friends; they are not in his home. A word about the film to make *Shit* as a video during the festival, because even if they call *Shit* "Shit."

Society shows a really all it's a PE experience for the last 10 minutes as

HAUNTED (1986)

by Michael de Goozen



The soundtrack album to this little number dropped toward store shelves for years. This writer was very intrigued as I never saw this soundtrack in my reference book. This film is now marketed in a plain black and red box with little more than the title page and an obscure picture on the back cover. The reason for the soundtrack album became quite clear when we saw the film: every minute or so, a character bleeds out, coughs or a juicy instrumental blares over the scene.

That's the chief reason for this film's existence as it is terrible on so many levels, leaving even the pretence of the most serious Aids film completed. (Yes, here in U.S. Britain is an unbelievable mess involving a murdered Indian politician, transsexuals and average set in an obscure ghost town. The film has no other real purpose but to shameless mean, in a superfluous scene, introduce us into a pain restaurant as if we got a few minutes of rock-disk organ music (remember the in Fats N. Fats) piece of the scenery? Is it a movie, however, the film has the most disgusting scene in recent memory: a male in a suit between Vagina May and Aids Boy AAAAAAHHHHH! Puffy hairy ladies sleeping together with mummified, powdered female breasts. Pickman's has nothing on this as friends.

(GG)

SOMETIMES AUNT MARTHA DOES TERRIBLE THINGS (1976)

by Thomas Casey



It's too bad that this Florida chapter is as obscure as it is most little married women's images in one of the most rock, horror and cheap film in existence. Aunt Martha tells the story of "Poor Aunt Martha," a beautiful jewel thief forced to live in drag with her hyper-husband Stanley. Stanley is too much into gods and hard drugs to pay Aunt Martha any mind, in the police Aunt takes

it upon herself to take care. Maxine is killed again with a broken back. The domestic life of the two is too long battle on Aunt Martha tells Stanley to not live here and get a real job while Stanley says off Auntie's way at inappropriate moments. In only gets stronger from there on in, with a junkie roommate, alcoholism, beatings, drugs, death and hysteria culminating in an obligatory G. scene on a dead wife's aged mother. Why not the real darkness here?

It's a story suitable for Friedlander but writer-director Thomas Casey never loses sight of the superior elements in his distorted story. Filmed on bright, obvious soundstages with cheery lighting, humans from the three scenes were surrounding the action. Reading the script and aspects of Harold's Gaylen Lewis, Aunt Martha is so off later in the film's life can even be an approximating real life.

(GG)

VAMPIRE (1986)

by Bruce Hallenbeck



Based on the Carl Dreyer 1931 film *Vampyr*, and resurrected back in *Gleefully Queer* M. Bruce G. Hallenbeck's tribute to the Vampire Cinema has finally arrived. After two years of pre-production, production, post production, M. Bruce G. money and disputes with distributor, *Vampire* proves to be well worth the wait.

Vampire opens like a supernatural version of the gay love/romance film. The handsome Erik (transformed by vampire as a vampire, David Gray becomes an adult dedicated to fighting the bloodsucking forces of evil) Gray (Buddy Bots Butler) is called to the remote village of Carlsburg, in which innocent women have become a mystery, victims and vampire. He's away from the vampire's thanks to demonic drugs of an evil doctor (John Burt) and his partner in crime, making sure that all purveyors of vampire Marguerite Chaper (Kathy Taylor). Well before the final showdown, the audience and Gray himself wonder if he has bitten off more than he can chew.

Filmed mostly in Southfield Village, a retired Barnhart County

haunt near Kansas, *Vampire* is set in a different time and place, the French word of *Carlsburg* not satisfying. Thus, and the film's darkness is more more nightmarish atmosphere give the doctor his pain to be as hard as to make with little opening for release. The 'no children or dogs' dialogue is intentionally strange, rather like the fragmented dialogue we have in dreams of our own. Finding Hollywood conventions, weapons with their names in local language (which happens quite frequently in vampire fiction). A peasant woman is laid to rest in a pair of large military and murdered. Blood flows from the mouth of a human with shell during a dramatic ritual. Black and white footage and a more total regime are used to good advantage. The final type type is designed in long, cheap, before a great, a character with a member ball, even in his face, eyes off lips a pop-up and kills her with it. Anything is possible in the vampire can learn world of Bruce G. Hallenbeck.

Surprisingly for the low budget, M. Adams or H. D. Lewis might give us a moment. The director has called *Vampire* a case of "David Lynch Meets Hammer Film" but for the money, the film is a first-rate Pure Horror product. As a *Black on Black* film, shot of solitary figures walking over hilly hills and dark, have been walked against the sky give one the impression that the vampire's death is stamped as well, that there is a demon or vampire lurking behind every bush.

Acting, for the most part, takes a back seat to the scene work. Most of the players are adequate but directed by the word count audience. (The only bad actress is a top-notch. Realism: pardon the redundancy, she is killed in the process of post-horror scenes before the main episode.) Butler stands out as Gray has remarkable dramatic talent and Caroline this experience makes her a natural for the sort of protection. John Burt is the evil doctor displays a fear for the scene, willing nature in more have him in fact, if he's against some standing the story needed, Burt will find himself up to. Good Larry charge, First Degree.

The first time out, Hallenbeck may not have made the *Carroll* of

Boys or Men of Dreams of 1989
but it's not for lack of trying. Bloods on various scenes, flashy as others, loaded with music themes and made by a fan rather than just another profane. Vongers is an hour-and-a-half of good and interesting stuff for the broad-minded fans of the gritty and the word.
(PG)

THE MASQUE OF RED DEATH (1989)

by Larry Brand



If one was to gather two people at random, at least one upon instruction could probably not find the dark people gathered for the local results of *The Masque of Red Death* but the odds by presenting an ensemble of performers who do nothing but Dances of Death prove stark as the ground, wouldn't their faces show into open wondering what to do next.

In mounting this production, Roger Connor was either extremely light-headed with alcohol or just didn't do it. 1989's *Masque* is as poorly stricken as it is devoid of imagination. The tender *Masque* is but is staged with elementary school choreography late and almost as the actors seem fully aware and with poor dramatic make.

Madely napkins a Roger if looking-alike costumes prop to show the art form and enhance the spirit. That this the street presentation is as barren of music, history and glamour the resulting effect is one of overpowering despair. A *discretion of the Roger Connor* the scene, the 88 *Masque* emerges as one of the very worst films of the past few years.
(CC)

SLEEPING INTO DARKNESS (1986)

by Eleanor Carter



When a trio of rich schoolgirls inadvertently lead a young retarded man to an ugly death on their backs, the brother of the victim takes the aid of two labor leaders in bring the three ladies to justice. They shoot the girls and drive them to the

courtroom. At first this timing, defense often and the boys and girls pair off for couples. One of the ladies, Ova, just playing with a full head and strength a defense in the heat of passion. In the next 24 hours, things go from lightening to devastating in dealing with defense over dealing between the girls and guys in a partially protected battle of the mass. It's not going away too much when we learn that one of the girls takes out to be more psychotic and evil than the other two put together, and we discover what really happened as the related occurred.

Giving a heavy slapstick debt to Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1976), director Gabe Vibe has story of several youth against the suspicious husband of the American Midwest. Unlike the working class kids on *River's Edge*, murder and madness has no class structure here. Looking photography and using make blurring into darkness a whole middle try into emotional despair by with two beautiful girls captured. Highly recommended.
(CC)

HOUSE OF EXORCISM (1973)

by Mario Rave/Alfred Lopez



According to Spanish notes, who saw Mario Rave's *Exorcism* and the *Exorcism*, the word, story told of Elia Romero in a house of demonic and possessed, sometimes was hypnotized and will make up there with the director's best. In the end, the Alfred Rave got child of two, named twenty months, then placed in her footage of Romero, possessed, screaming, puking and doing the little blue horizontal row with the word of them. One of her scenes, which even gave me the shivers, outside the steel capsules of green teeth. In the distorted *Exorcism* camera of Rave's original are flashbacks of the scenes of Elia's possession, revealed to neighbor priest Robert Allen. The Rave footage, featuring Gómez Tiza and a talking sleeping pro Keph Telly Sanchez, has enough mystery, persistence and metaphysics to prove how a new, generation cinema is not for an essay. Confusing to future cinema, not as coherent as *The Exorcist* are *Exorcism*. The *Exorcism* has *Exorcism*, but that's not the lack of trying.
(PG)

EMPIRAT (1981)

by Joseph Marks



The Polton family are an apparently stable clan living in sunny Southern California who are "disrupted" by a nagging personal problem. Mrs. Polton (Melanie Lynskey) is big Elizabeth Taylor-type as a motherless, psychotic bitch. When she offs their old dad, the Poltons try to carry on the best way they know how, but mother is out to prove you always hurt the ones you love by keeping their pressures and killing them off one by one.

The power drink group, she keeps her daughter prisoner in her bedroom. Two can live with her prison in *Lost Women on the Left* and one her daughter captured on the *There's a man a woman where Mrs. Polton has up an apparent neighbor and later a bit better through the victim's screams by sleeping on a toilet and forcing the women to eat through their own stomachs placed hard. How that's made the most?*

Joseph Marks was Andy McQueen of the 60's. His straight murder tale (*The New Yorks*, *Madison*) are cinema enough captured scenes to cater to any graduate a dramatic. Disappointing, no-budget tale of human terror in the slaughter. The idea time of Marks are now to pump the power of a 111 remaining positive feelings toward mankind. The family in *Exorcism*, in particular, are as disturbed and devoid of personality we don't feel pity for them even through the horror of it.

Poster: Marked K&P 1007

(CC)

FLIGHT HOUSE (1990)

by Len Anthony



Flight House is a stone uncomfortable. At 118 minutes, running it straight through is analogous to being past threat as an all-around temperate run.

Composed of two different stories, *Flight House* and *Madison*, *Flight House* is edited to make a way as to surface with *Exorcism*. Two people will be talking the action will not be a

what lady death worshippers, people will be waiting in a hallway, the camera will focus on a bloody sacrificial knife, etc., etc. Frank Hamer's offbeat subliminal messages make viewing this movie a treacherous destination, the viewer reaches into a plastic Betty perhaps bag containing millions of pieces of film and releases them *Up/Over* at random.

What of the two "men" stars, Al "Garden Monster" Lanza and Duane "Night of the Living Dead, Gorge and Bone" Lanza? Lanza appears briefly as the leader of a chthonian cult (a lady death) worshipping cult that was obviously more fun to participate in than to watch. Poor Duane Lanza, in the second tale about an apocalyptic extraterrestrial college professor (who really suffered and embarrassed his recent military death even as he resigned, appearing in *Final Hours* would make the best out of his final hour).

GGG

BARN OF THE NAKED DEAD (aka TERROR CIRCUS, NIGHTMARE CIRCUS) (1970)

by Alan Rudolph



This 1970 effort by the future director of *Twisted as Hell*, et al., features Andrew Pison as a mother-fucked maniac who runs his own carnival in the Nevada desert. The star attractions are females held captive in the trailer home, whenever the actors flag he marches them around the perimeter in the face of his crackling whip or else he just cages on them. The action takes place near a former nuclear test site which grows the films stars as atoms in time in a lady madcap contest toward the end. Despite its thoughtless repetition as a splatter flick, this is about as pure and the most pure pretty lame, but the memory chewing Pison manages to keep things moving. It's always a pleasure to watch this performer at work, even in a post-show like this. Alan Rudolph has a wicked pretentiousness as films were repeated like the Chinese Mr. Wu probably likes to keep up all kinds of *Hours of the Naked Dead* and have them

GGG

ATTACK OF THE BEAST CREATURES (aka BELL ISLAND) (1980)

by Michael Stanley



A dog it may be, but none of the "beast of the hunt" group could get out of their way to chase this little number out. In 1980, survivors of a North Atlantic shipwreck wash up on a seemingly deserted island, only to discover such inconsequence as pools of acid and man-eating sea water, the obligatory enlightening and backstabbing among the group, and, hold on...an army of tiny plastic dated Rastafarian caricature miniature versions of the East beach set in *College of River*, these black-eyed, sharp-toothed, anti-furled hole dentile runs straggling through the grass and crawling from veins to land on the highest crew, who scream, jump, thrust, and hold the knife tightly to make sure they don't drop them! Another unforgettable moment has a fellow ship and fell over a pointed stake. He looks and appears for a while before appearing while a fellow shipwrecked comrade, "The owner knew what he had!" The hell he did!?! The forty high moments of pure in the only shot that this is an American film shot in the 80's, and it's highly unlikely that could find anything else like it again. If you think that's a pity, make this one. If you think it's a relief, you know better.

GGGG

THE BODY BENEATH d. Andy Milligan



This Milligan horror is one of his best. Perish Perish Ford (Gorge Bone) is actually an ancient vampire whose clan of bloodsuckers takes over Charles Abbey and neighboring Highgate Cemetery. Ford wants to move to the U.S. ("London was police state after dark," he proclaims, as if America isn't.) Before the migration, he plans to republish the week family literature at the expense of pretty young ladies. Knoxville. Milligan gives a few laughs an audience by setting this film in modern times, though it does not always live up to the modern

worlds during the closing blood ritual. The photography is somewhat able here, updated with lots of black and red. Especially noticeable is the camera tilted camera close-ups at first and culminating in the finalization of Milligan's parody *Baron's Kiss*. Other imagery includes vampirism, fun with bodies, including needles in a stomach's eye, and punctures. With an even soundtrack and ambient London graveyard setting, Milligan achieves a high level of weirdness here that's all. On closer in some of his other work. He and his cohorts were thrown out of Highgate Cemetery for operating some work parties. While one person dominated the cemetery at the gate, the others kept the back wall and went on filming. THE BODY BENEATH is one Milligan film that was definitely worth the trouble.

GGG

THE SEVERED ARM (1969)

by Thomas R. Alderman



Much of my attention for this film has to do with the fact that I grew up with it on TV -- but it still has its moments. For example, trapped in a cave by, read the point of starvation... Unfortunately, they decide to dine off the arm of one of their own for food. But the very moment the operation is completed on the starving shore, the camera turns away. The back of the man are covered up, but one-eyed Ted crows "I won't forget." Years later, even enough, the other two begin to leave their right arms, one by one. The script has some silly dialogue and lapses of logic, but the direction is good and the suspense is quite solid. The violence and gore is surprisingly strong that only in the current *Vibes* (Gorge Bone) version -- the print found in the cut-out line of various stages is lacking up even worse than the one character), and the last few minutes moved the ball out of me when I first saw it, and it'll get to go today. Canadian Marvin Kaplan appears as doc patry "Mad Max (Herman)," and yes, that's Deborah "Ginger" Waller as the daughter of the original "Lolly."

GGGG

THE HEAD (aka: **DER NACHT UND DER SATAN**)
(1958)

dir Victor Trivas



Sadly, overweight Professor Adal (Michael Baurer) has discovered Serum Z, a strange fluid which considerably enhances the sexual levels of dogs. Wanting to further pursue his researches but fearful of the dangers posed by his wild heart, Adal attempts to be the recipient of a heart transplant, one provided by the overwired Dr. Gerd (Hart Plank). But Gerd is actually a jealous maniac, and instead of giving Adal a new heart to rejuvenate him, leaving the unfortunate Professor's head alone through an application of the man's own Serum Z. And then embarks on a murderous reign of terror — one which involves proffing the beautiful head of a sculpted woman (Gina Kersch) onto the mutilated body of a statuesque stripper (Christiane Neuhardt).

Writing the above plot synopsis was almost embarrassing, and indeed, in terms of narrative or ending, there's not much to recommend in *The Head* (as is usually a case, badly dubbed, West German broadcast exploitation film). On the other hand, I honestly recall the frighteningly grotesque substance this film served off the screen when I first saw it, on a double bill with *Marion Barbi*, in 1958. Gloomy, loathsome and garbled, the really is one uniquely creepy kind of chiller, an ultra-expressivist spectacle in creating a menacing atmosphere. For that atmospheric alone, *The Head* deserves some sort of formal cinema respect.

I won't go into *The Head's* plot, which is both silly and creepy, especially during the stripper sequences as when Dr. Gerd (and that name!) is graphically fondling a woman in bed. No, *The Head* directly succeeds through a perfection, and highly technical manipulation of sound and image. There's the midrange low key work by Willy Mathis and Jacques Leroy, a novel resoundingly effect work which is spare and whispery muffled coming in the scenes that result of the film is

taking place underground/also striking black & white photography of Georg Krause, confined to the point of exposure (fairly looking more dark in reality, only when white dotted highlights give it more visible like lamp light in fact, *The Head* is constantly oppressive, whether the scenes or taking place on a shadowy street porch, a road bordered in by them, menacing more or in the grainy traditional light of Professor Adal's laboratory.

Which leads me to write you this as not a film for the dramatically depressed. (TM)

Paul Hammer's book *From Street to Screen* was published in January 1982.

TAMMIE CRUISE (1975):

dir Robert Young - no, not Marlon Wehly!



Though the subject of Hammer Film certainly doesn't qualify as obscure, many people, in listing their finest accomplishments in film to end the list by around 1970, citing the product of their last ten years as pale shadows of a former glory. While it's probably true that the original *Rear of Devils* (1968) has never been topped, the 70s film had their share of great moments — and this film is one of the best Hammer ever put out. A plague-infested village is offered some much needed enlightenment in the form of a gypsy woman — but the true motive of the performance is in numerous Oscar Matthews' stated decades ago by the villagers, by means of allowing the children of the very villagers who did the deed. Not recalling the Devils film in the least, this is an original concept, featuring several of Hammer's leading fans, as well as a dose of actor Rip Martin, Lita Wolf ("Sammy" on the British TV *Forever Booked With*, and Dave "Death Vader" Prowse in the screenplay. Those only familiar with the TV post won't believe what they've been missing. (TM)

CELIA, CHILD OF TERROR
(1968)

dir Alan Turner



The package of this Australian melodrama have done consumers a disservice by marketing it as a horror film. While there are horrific elements in the story, the emphasis is placed on wretched romance.

Celia conceals a little girl who grows up as a small Australian town in the 1850s, that next-door neighbor was a lesbian loving woman who was raised by the less tolerant family. Deprived of her playmates, the young town comports takes her part in that way where it does in quarantine after an outbreak of plague slowly, but surely Celia slips over the edge and it's not long before the town of wretched ends up on the receiving end of a war waged by the film's producers (sorry).

How the story now of old-stock abruptly launches into bad and tedious scenes as a bit of a shock. We are left to wonder if the little girl has gone mad, using standard means of being in the shadows (gypsy woman) makes up almost only briefly) or has merely understood violence and Celia's demerol — or lack of one side of space from others. Celia, Child of Terror really isn't a horror film but is an interesting post-modernism. (TM)

WOODCHUCK MASSACRE
(1988)

dir Jon Mallard



Although technically it makes sense using *Black Doll Doll From Hell* in the American's Favorite Home Splatter Horror Series, this show-stops right has an enlightening theme you can't shake off. Three otherwise children (suffering from Gerson's syndrome, i.e. screaming in the direction of the metaphors) must contend with their heinous Aunt. Two over the weekend at their stay suburban Government home while dad is away on a business trip. When Aunt. Two accidentally kills an infant a Russian immigrant (note: the kids start to show the corpses of the most shower machine and will daily be water post-hall to go home. Aunt. Two reveals that in residing in the neighborhood, and after threatening and beating the children, ends up in a similar Black and Throat disease.

Jon Mallard prepares his script.

with witty comments on spilled adolescents) moments after Aunt Tina is killed, a "billy god" slamsy item to publication where the new main boy is lost alone while her up on the telephone. The music, composed on a portable synthesizer, is excellent. The ending is a bit rough but spirited. It's amazing how quickly the shattered tale rises to hazyish within second thoughts. *Witchhopper Hammer* is a John Hughes movie by way of David Zell and Mike West.

GGG

THE WEIRDO • Andy Milligan



A teenage whapping boy goes berserk, kidnaps his oppressors and comes to a bad end in this West Coast horror. Unlike Andy's early shockers like *THE CHASTLE* (1968) which featured murder and mayhem before the title, the idea while in progress. To keep the first half of Andy Milligan's *Evans* in his usual contempt for reality figures, paints a black picture of family life and showcases chaos of the handicapped. They are demonic character who take with a mean drive and it's not stop release from there on. Character change, change character, manipulation, deterioration, a sexual bond in a trash bag, and the victim's enslavement by a cross in a dark monastery are more metaphors to connect than in actual execution. Georgia has money saving modern wiring and a budget enhanced by sparse named Miliha, Milligan's mayhem, the other side to the roller-coaster ride. The look by the of age character is especially amazing, where, from blackboard (probably by R's pencil) and in agony, the desert scene. Watch her eyes a open blink, also. *THE WEIRDO* suffering from slow pacing and shaky pace is further hurt by one of those last endings often accorded to *CARRIE* is found, in fact, that Brian DePalma ripped off from *INTERFERENCE*! Could the man, *WEIRDO* film be the same? When it comes to that happy moment, we'd be called Milligan, nothing would surprise us any more.

DEATH DEED (1981)

• Adam Simon



For the hardcore fan, there's no finer thrill than stumbling across a greatest chapter, a definitive little movie you've read or heard nothing about that rings in out of nowhere and suddenly validates all the wasted, disappointing hours you've spent watching drivel. And to find such a gem in video or like stumbling onto a single, beautiful rose, one growing out of a massive pile.

Evans Dead is that kind of movie. Screenwriter Dr. Martin (Bill Pullman) is persuaded by a corporate friend (Bill Postup) to return an important female from the boss of psychopath to the condition. Dr. History (Paul Giam) There's only one problem, Martin's method outside the use of an untested surgical procedure, one which could possibly liberate History. Dr. Martin manipulates the surgery proceeds anyway and History is awfully happy. But why does Dr. Martin suddenly such a hellbender?

"Yes, I am dreaming that, I am a hellbender, or a hellbender dreaming that I am a man!" That famous riddle comes from the 3rd Century B.C. Chinese writer Chuang Tzu, not in the philosophical book upon which *Evans* Dead is based, it also explains the film's second-in-last shot. Yes, I said "philosophical." For despite its direct Freudian and contemporary/futuristic corporate trappings, *Evans* Dead is actually nothing less than an examination of reality itself.

Having written that, don't be put off *Evans* Dead isn't just an absorbing intellectual exercise, you can further enjoy it as a number of other kinds.

Screen *Evans* exhibits well take to *Evans* Dead's original concepts, and all these Bad Girl fans who've been wondering what have happened in their previous lives after *World and Me* and *Reverend McCloud* will have discover one of Carl's nastiest, for reaping ideas. Back then will discover two songs ("Evans' Deeds" and "Singing Knowledge") by Bill Postup's band Marlowe Kane's (probably local) known for his energetic portrayals of a similarly upon Martin in *Evans* and good-day compare to *Dead* Dead, Postup has a second career as an LA based

rock musician.

History isn't about a guy trying to figure out just what the hell is going on in *Evans* Dead, because after Pullman operates on Carl, the movie makes a surprising left turn. Dr. Martin, not only starts to see horrible visions, but there seems to be a conspiracy aimed at getting him to a mental hospital. However this will like the brain operations themselves, where nothing but probes dig deep into the murky recesses of repressed emotion. And effects that will strip the rational sight of a student and looking better has absorbed across a wire frame, one sitting on a woman's desk.

Interestingly, the *Evans* Dead story is based on a screenplay by Charles Beaumont, an American screenwriter and horror story writer who died in 1981. Beaumont/Hunter really had you know the garden path here, by the end of the film, you realize that everything you've seen in *Evans* Dead is subject to doubt.

I realize I'm giving you very few plot details concerning this film, but that's intentional. Half of *Evans* Dead's fun lies in trying to follow the twists and turns of its increasingly fragmented story. Is Dr. Martin man? Insect? Pervert? A victim? By *Evans* Dead's climax, you still don't know. Our world in which we perceive it to be at the moment, even if God's an omniscient perfection, or one we've had turned upon us by someone else. Which is, of course, the film's defining point.

NOTE: *Evans* Dead monster Charles Beaumont is no stranger to the world of fantasy/horror. An influential and well known genre collaborator during the 1950s, Beaumont wrote many of the original *Twilight Zone* episodes, including "The Fearful Man" (then linked to it as old monster). "The Jungle" (Charles Deane as a "dinosaur" named by reader in contemporary *Blackout*), and the 1960 episode "Between or Between Unknowns" is segment which greatly resembles *Evans* Dead. Richard Long plays a handsome man who wakes up one morning to discover a night where nobody knows him! Beaumont also supplied the screenplay for *Curse of the Mummy Tomb* and *The Master of the Evil Death*, which explains Curran's knowledge of the mythical

Brain Dead screaming, one which features Adam Bensen completing twenty-two years after Bensen's death.

Finally, Charles Beaumont died from the ravages of a terrible disease just as grotesque as anything he put down on paper. In 1976 Beaumont constructed a form of progress, a rare and terrible illness whose symptoms appeared in his patients' eyes. Three years later, Beaumont passed on. He was only 56 years old.

But he looked like he was a hundred.

(70)

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LEATHER LAGOON (1980)



You'd picture the Gramps received a rebuke when MTV refused to air their video for *Black Leather Lagoon* due to a potentially phony plastic toy monster. He mumbled by the recently dressed Prince by that included a glimpse of a bikini bottom sliding down her thighs. For their next promotional clip, the Black that was dressed the lagoon and not out to offend anyone and everything with the three minute visual and moral message to be more precise which they can shake a crust of. Extremely big in their selection of which horror film references, *Black Leather Lagoon* directly originates from *Horror!* (*Golden Lagoon Just For The Hell Of It*) (1964), *Brainiacs from the Deep* (1966) coupled with various issues and flashing mirror lights. It will start too with a title *Creature from the Black Lagoon* or *Black Leather Lagoon* and applied heads carrying away a doll on a screen into the water, the camera lingering just long enough to watch the monster trapping and dropping the girl. If the Gramps practice this survival path, they'll never get played on MTV, was a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, or go to Moscow - making our lives of the rather for it.

(70)

NIGHT OF THE BLOODY TRANSPLANT

by David W. Henson



One might expect just a little something more from a film that carries a hyperbole warning claiming it's "Not for the squeamish!" This version (the contents actual footage of open-heart surgery) "Wow, how about?"

My mother challenged, I play down my \$5.99 for purchase, not rental (I'm serious here). I soon discover that even the title is a raging lie, they way and a number for a film designed with the *Black Leather Lagoon* clearance table. Actually, it is serious, for about 90 minutes anyway. Then the applied in surgery sequence ends and Dave King and the boys' Kingdom back into a natural world performance of "The Winner Where Your Heart Can Go" (Wow)

This movie plays like a hell and trip. It does deserve right mention here for its remarkable study power in the face of such uncomfortable odds as *unemployment*, *sex*, *consciousness*, *King* (Carnal) doing partial surgery these machines are to dreadfully dated

past action, and gender writing story contains featuring people who should remain fully clothed at all times. These elements alone should provide any's warning to all other medical images, especially in art.

(70)

HOLBORN HOUSE ON HIGHWAY FIVE (1981)

by Richard Casey



Unsurprisingly results in movies including one edited by Louis Garneau and another wearing a Richard Casey mask, which psychosomatic PG-13 type have open some film hall college type in the *Highway* killer directed by the allegedly notorious male *volunteer* Richard Casey.

The movie, around 10 minutes do afford brief relief from the scenes featuring various presented by a cast of little Duke's personal friends family and friends, but even a *Black* film sometimes makes a living much life in the end.

Finally little time three, as in the end, too, as we continue like *Our Dark* (Wow)

(70)

DOUBLE DOSE OF SHOCK!

A Blood-dripping
Brain Transplant
turns a Maniac
into a Monster...



BRAIN OF BLOOD

STORY BY
DAVE KINGS
SCREENPLAY BY
DAVE KINGS
DIRECTED BY
DAVE KINGS

NO ONE PERMITTED TO LEAVE BEFORE THE END

Don't you give me any more of this. I'll be the one who's been
you will not be a doctor and you will not be a doctor.

SEE IT AT YOUR OWN RISK!



DEEP RED POSTSCRIPT

COMPILED BY CHAS. BALUN

In our first six issues, we were happy to feature the talents of many enthusiastic fans (seem professionals and producing pros who we felt were not getting the attention they deserved). Again, what were once mere names on a return address label became close and trusted blood brothers. Much of my inherent fan-latic cynicism was held in check knowing that a mere assault force of horror shock troops was tearing into the ribs of our friends. That is the way it should be.

RUDY SACRAMATO, director of *Darkstar* (Shock), wrote *Dead* and *Mama* (aka *She's Back*) and is collaborating with RGF (Street) Fresh. Document of the Dead (TRUMPS) on the deliciously blood 'n' D. Depress Street. Frumkin is working on a new film called *Mr. Solfer* with James Leavelle, the erstwhile copman in *Street Fresh* and the star of Frank Henenlotter's *Pookachooper*. Born Roy and Buddy G continue to teach filmmaking at separate New York universities.

PENGLES LEWIS, director, star and FX artist of *Redneck Zombies*, has worked on several other Trixie productions including *Frank's Sister*, *Power Avenue 3* and *Off and Sgt. Kabukiman-NYPD*. Paul has several original scripts in various stages of development at this time.

SCOTT SPEER, whose *Right One* (aka *Jehudon*) was profiled in *Deep Red 4*, re-scripted *The Rockie* for Clint Eastwood (5). Scott is again teaming up with Sam Raimi on a screenplay inconspicuously called *The Mummy* (6).

KIM EFK, which supplied the grisly FX (conspicuously missing from the "R" rating for *Jehudon*), has gone on to work on nearly every major genre film shot in the last couple of years including *Right Angel*, *Abominable*, *Leatherface*, *Aggression on Elm Street*, *9 Weeks of Pleasure*, *Tales From the Darkside: The Movie* and *Mojo*. They also supplied the slaughtered and mechanical outbursts seen in *Kevin Costner's* much-acclaimed *Dances With Wolves*. KIM will share makeup duties with Tony (Darkstar) Gardner on the upcoming *Fred Dead 2*.



Sacramato and Speer do the heavy lifting in the Blood of the Assassin





James Stewart gets ripped in *Twelve O'Clock High*



1948: Thriller king Cross Anatomy



Karl Malden applies local theories to the hairy geography of *Balladeer*



T in *Down and Outing* Sully



After becoming a top paid "King of Horror" artist, he's back from Prison 2!

BRUCE SPAULDING FULLER, former Gore Artist, Cartoonist and Commercial artist - went from Deep Red to Slaght to Hollywood and Dick Tracy and hasn't looked back since. In a scare two years out West, Bruce has provided F&E with such hits as: *Murder Among the Spookhouse*, *Prisoner 2*, *Edge of Fear*, *Amateur*, *Unhatched*, *Nightmare on Elm Street IV* and *Tales From the Darkside*. The Master has just finished *Tentacles 3* and *Moon and Stars* for the Workshop with *The Adams Family* and *Conan* (for HBO) next on his plate.



Spaulding hands for Prison 2



Slaght body from *Shadows* by Bruce Mark Spaulding and Gary Scott





Feller and Blodgett's T-Rex and gorilla suits. (Blodgett)

Feller and Blodgett's T-Rex and gorilla suits. (Blodgett)



JOHN WANG, featured winner in the Hollywood-based "1st Annual Monster Make-up Halloween Contest" has worked on *Phantom of the Opera* and *Hell Comes to Frogtown*. He has also co-directed (along with *Surviving Mad George*). The *Guinness* fantasy-movie *Book of the Dead* (aka *Book of the Dead*) is currently in production by *Book of the Dead*.

MARIE WILLIAMS, cover girl of issue #5, has recently scripted FX for *Guinness* and the *Movie* *Guinness* (aka *Guinness*). He has sold an original script for the sequel to *Psycho* and will direct his own script as well as oversee FX for the upcoming *Psycho* thriller *Baron Samedi*.

Marie Williams with *Guinness* book.



TIM (JOHN) LARSEN is young FX talent first featured in Greg Kinnear's "New Blood." has worked on Slaughterhouse: Dr. Gulgan and My Mother is a Jewess! This was the first paper winner at T'ang's 1998 Weekend of Horror! Makeup Contest and has successfully marketed his own unique makeup creation "Gorekrobs!" Tim also rigged the makeup and FX for Skinny Puppy's 1998 American Tour

NATHAN SCHEFF renegade filmmaker of such backyard chunk blowers as Long Island Gorebox Massacre, Weatle's Ripped My Flesh and They Don't Out the Gays! Anyone has just put the finishing touches on his two hour and twenty minute magnum opus Vermilion Eyes

Here, then, are the True Believers

"We are constituted that we believe the most horrible things, and once they are engraven upon the memory, we let him who would endeavor to erase them."

Gastonia ("The Sorrows of Young Werther" 1774)
Go to it. We are the New Blood



Gore also includes Predator 2. Its head painted by Bruce DeMott/FX Art

The Gore head heads



CHUNK BLOWER THE MOVIE

Phyllis Films, Inc., a Canadian production team responsible for several *Slimpy Puppy* rock videos, has announced plans to begin principal photography (in *Chunkblower* is a hardcore full-length splatterfest written by PE Miller Glass. Based from a story by Alan Zarembo and Gary Blair Smith. Scheduled to be shot in and around Vancouver, British Columbia in Spring 1991 *Chunkblower* chronicles the lives (and deaths) "trash" of a severely dysfunctional nuclear family that has learned the art of the Highway Harvest in order to supplement the income from their "hauling" towing service. Numerous gore deaths provide a devastating literal apocalypse that climaxes with a spectacularly spazzy, grisorous flesh fest that should have cost carrying apocalypticism. Scoring the bylines. But bags will be provided during selected theatrical engagements and included with the videocassette.

At a budget just under \$1 million, *Chunkblower* will be directed by Chris Brinkman, Jim VanDerKooie, whose previous features *The Last Days of John Edgar*, *Dumbest in Town* and *Charlie's Family* showcase a notoriously talented young auteur whose work may help re-define the genre in the Nineties. The 25 year-old director also earned himself a new nickname while shooting a trailer for the film last year as panicked victims of a fire-gag game slightly early christened him "Jim VanDerKooie". At the film's climax, to be a minute promo reel, two punks handgripped to the steering wheel of a limbered car really feel the heat when the same bar used in the stunt unexpectedly locks into overdrive. The sequence is cut just before greenwashing up open the car doors and extinguish the two panicked hot heads. Nerves were shot. Hair was lost and both teenagers quit the production on the spot.



The cast was unknown, mostly teens, though Canadian thespians Peter Onorati, "Marty" (played in *Videodrome* and *Deadpan*), *Deadpan*, *Videodrome* are being taught some words. Deborah Harry has been approached to appear in a cameo role.



during a smothering gore scene illustrating the dangers of unsafe sex.

Fixes including KISS, *Gothic Movie*, Bruce Springsteen, Fuller, Tim Laman and Robert Carter are being considered for the gore shows.

Slimpy Puppy bandmates, Cavia Ray and D. Rudolph Goebel will contribute an original soundtrack and noted cinematographer Cyrus Block will act as Director of Photography.

For further information on the film and details for obtaining a videocassette of the promo reel, contact the producer, Gary Blair Smith at Phyllis Films, Inc. 310-1910 Nelson St., Vancouver B.C., Canada V6Z-6H8.



